United Nations

S/PV.4819

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4819th meeting

Thursday, 4 September 2003, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir Emyr Jones Parry	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Yotov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. von Ungern-Sternberg
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Mexico	Mr. Pujalte
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lobach
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-48714 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

Farewell to the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of September, may I begin by paying a particular tribute on behalf of all of us to His Excellency Ambassador Mikhail Wehbe, Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, for his very distinguished and very important service as President of the Council in the month of August. I am sure I speak for all of us in expressing our appreciation of the role which Ambassador Wehbe and Ambassador Mekdad both carried out.

In particular, I would like to express every best wish to Ambassador Wehbe, who after a long period of service to his country at the United Nations in New York, is now going to move on to another part of the United Nations family. We have no doubt that he will continue to carry on his work with the same distinction in Geneva as he has done in New York. We wish him every success and the best of luck in that appointment.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would not have wanted to intervene at this point in the meeting, but since this will be the last Council meeting I shall attend, I would like, Sir, at this very first meeting of your presidency to begin by congratulating you. I am confident that you will lead the Council's deliberations this month with your well-known wisdom and diplomatic expertise. We know that you will lead the Council to success. This month is full of events, notably a meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers, who will be here in New York for the opening of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

I would like to thank you wholeheartedly, Sir, for the kind words you addressed to me. I also take this occasion to thank all the Permanent Representatives on the Security Council, and the members of their delegations, for the cooperation and assistance they extended to me, as well as for the coordination they all undertook to ensure international peace and security. I wish each and every one of them success in their endeavours.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them documents S/2003/846 and S/2003/847, which contain the texts of two draft resolutions prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the two draft resolutions before it. If I hear no objection, I shall put the two draft resolutions to the vote now, one after the other.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I first put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2003/846.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1504 (2003).

I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2003/847.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1505 (2003).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

United Nations

S/PV.4820 (Part I)

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4820th meeting

Tuesday, 9 September 2003, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir Emyr Jones Parry	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Cheng Jingye
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

Letters dated 20 and 23 December 1991, from France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America (S/23306, S/23307, S/23308, S/23309 and S/23317)

Letter dated 15 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/818)

Letter dated 15 August 2003 from the Permanent Representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/819)

Voting on draft resolution S/2003/824

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 2.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letters dated 20 and 23 December 1991, from France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America (S/23306, S/23307, S/23308, S/23309 and S/23317)

Letter dated 15 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/818)

Letter dated 15 August 2003 from the Permanent Representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/819)

Voting on draft resolution S/2003/824

The President: The bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie was an appalling act of terrorism which cost the lives of 270 people of many different nationalities. Families and friends — many of whom are here today — have endured continuing pain and grief since that date. As a result of painstaking negotiations, we are moving towards a resolution of this terrible affair. Libya has accepted responsibility; Libya has agreed to pay a substantial sum of compensation to the relatives of those who were murdered; and Libya has agreed to cooperate with any further Lockerbie investigation and has renounced terrorism. Those are all very substantial gains, which open the possibility of Libya moving back into the international community and of the lifting of sanctions.

The Security Council, in considering the agenda before it, is also conscious of two factors: first, that the Council, in a matter of this gravity, needs to act unanimously; and secondly, that there are other very legitimate concerns pertaining to Libya which still need resolution. It is in recognition of those factors that the Council, in an informal meeting, has had a very lengthy discussion of the related issues, and colleagues have concluded that the most appropriate course today would be for me, from the Chair, invoking rule 33 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, now to propose the adjournment of this meeting until 10.30 a.m. Friday, 12 September 2003, in the expectation that the agenda we have adopted today will be the agenda before us on Friday.

I thus put to the vote the procedural motion that the meeting be adjourned until 10.30 a.m. Friday, 12 September 2003.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The procedural motion is carried by unanimity.

The Council is united in its determination that it will address this issue at 10.30 on Friday.

The meeting rose at 2.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4820 (Part II)

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4820th meeting

Friday, 12 September 2003, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir Emyr Jones Parry	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Letters dated 20 and 23 December 1991, from France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America (S/23306, S/23307, S/23308, S/23309 and S/23317)

Letter dated 15 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/818)

Letter dated 15 August 2003 from the Permanent Representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/819)

Voting on draft resolution S/2003/824

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Expression of sympathy for the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

The President: I am sure I speak for all colleagues when I express our deepest sympathy over the tragic murder of the Swedish Foreign Minister, Anna Lindh.

Letters dated 20 and 23 December 1991, from France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America (S/23306, S/23307, S/23308, S/23309 and S/23317)

Letter dated 15 August 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/818)

Letter dated 15 August 2003 from the Permanent Representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/819)

Voting on draft resolution S/2003/824

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in which he requests that he be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Own (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. In doing so, the Council is continuing its meeting as agreed on 9 September 2003.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2003/824, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Bulgaria and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I should also like to draw the Council's attention to document S/2003/818, which contains the text of a letter dated 15 August 2003 from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and document S/2003/819, which contains the text of a letter dated 15 August 2003 from the United Kingdom and the United States.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it (S/2003/824). Unless I hear any objection I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, China, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Abstaining:

France, United States of America

The President: There were 13 votes in favour, no votes against and two abstentions. The draft resolution has therefore been adopted as resolution 1506 (2003).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): Before I begin my statement on today's voting, I would first like to acknowledge and express appreciation for the presence of a number of family members of Pan Am 103 victims from several countries, who have travelled to be with us today. We recognize the loss of their loved ones and wish to convey our deepest sympathy for their many years of suffering.

On 21 December 1988, the lives of 270 innocent men, women and children, representing over 20 different nationalities, were tragically cut short when Pan Am flight 103 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland. In 1992, after proof of Libya's responsibility for the bombing had been uncovered, the United Nations imposed sanctions on Libya. Since that time, the United States Government has worked with the

Government of the United Kingdom, the families of the Pan Am 103 victims and other members of the international community to ensure that Libya fulfilled a number of demands, including surrender of the two suspects for trial, acceptance of responsibility for the actions of its officials and payment of appropriate compensation.

United Nations sanctions were suspended in 1999 after Libya fulfilled one demand by transferring the two Libyan suspects for trial before a Scottish court sitting in the Netherlands. One defendant, Abdel Basset al-Megrahi, was convicted by the court of murder in 2001, and a Scottish appellate court upheld that conviction in 2002. Megrahi is currently serving a life sentence in a Scottish prison.

Libya has now addressed the remaining United Nations requirements related to the Pan Am 103 bombing. Among other steps, it has formally stated that it accepts responsibility for the actions of its officials and made arrangements to pay compensation to the families of the victims in accordance with an agreement worked out directly between them. Although nothing can bring back their loved ones, the hundreds of family members who have suffered for the past 15 years can take some measure of solace from these long-awaited steps.

In recognition of these steps, and to allow the families' settlement to go forward, the United States has not opposed the formal lifting of the United Nations sanctions on Libya. As stated in the joint letter from the United States and United Kingdom to the President of the Council on 15 August, we expect Libya to adhere scrupulously to the commitments it has now made to the Council to cooperate in the international fight against terrorism and to cooperate with any further requests for information in connection with the Pan Am 103 investigation.

Our decision, however, must not be misconstrued by Libya or by the world community as tacit United States acceptance that the Government of Libya has rehabilitated itself. The United States continues to have serious concerns about other aspects of Libyan behaviour, including its poor human rights record, its rejection of democratic norms and standards, its irresponsible behaviour in Africa, its history of involvement in terrorism, and — most important — its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Libya is actively pursuing a broad range of weapons of mass destruction and is seeking ballistic missiles. In those efforts, it is receiving foreign assistance, including from countries that sponsor terrorism. Libya's continued nuclear infrastructure upgrades raise concerns. Tripoli is actively developing biological and chemical weapons. The United States will intensify its efforts to end Libya's threatening actions. This includes keeping United States bilateral sanctions on Libya in full force.

In its compensation settlement with the Pan Am 103 families, Libya has tied the payment of some of the available funds to changes in United States bilateral measures related to Libya, something clearly outside the scope of the United Nations requirements. Furthermore, Libya has imposed an eight-month time limit during which these steps must be taken, unless it agrees otherwise. We hope that, by doing this, Libya is signalling that it intends to move quickly to address the concerns that underlie the United States measures. We also urge that Libya do so in order for the families to receive the balance of the available funds.

Nonetheless, the United States cannot guarantee that Libya will take the required steps and we would not want our vote on the resolution lifting sanctions to be misconstrued as a decision now to modify United States bilateral measures, regardless of future Libyan behaviour. After all, it has taken Libya almost 15 years to address Pan Am 103. For this reason, and because of the concerns I have stated, the United States has abstained in the voting on this resolution.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): The agreement reached yesterday between the representatives of the families of UTA flight 772 and the Qaddafi Foundation has allowed France not to oppose the lifting of sanctions against Libya. France welcomes this agreement, whereby conditions have been established for an equitable settlement of this painful matter, which, as members of the Council are aware, involves people of 17 nationalities — not only French, but also Africans, Americans and British citizens, in particular. The agreement generated a joint statement communicated to the members of the Council.

The lifting of sanctions against Libya is an important phase in the process of reintegrating that country into the international community. This normalization, which we encourage, presumes that

Libya will continue to make the necessary gestures beyond the requirements for the lifting of sanctions. France will be vigilant in ensuring that the agreement reached between the families of the victims of the bombing of the UTA flight and the Qaddafi Foundation are rapidly implemented. This is the substance of the position according to which France abstained in the voting on the resolution just adopted by the Security Council.

France urges Libya fully to comply with its assumed commitments. It also calls on Libya to take the measures expected of it on other issues that are critical to the international community, in particular to ensure an equitable settlement for victims of the attack on the La Belle discotheque in Berlin in 1986. We also intend to be vigilant with respect to all aspects involving human rights and combating terrorism.

France thanks the members of the Council and the families of the victims of the Lockerbie attack for the understanding they have shown throughout these recent weeks, particularly with respect to the latest postponement of the voting on the text.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): We, too, recognize the presence of members of the families of the victims and would like to express our sympathy with them. We welcome the fact that compensation will be made available to them after such a long delay.

We are relieved that Libya has fulfilled the demands of the Security Council and thereby enabled the definitive lifting of sanctions by the Security Council. Libya has undertaken an important step to free itself from the burdens of the past. A further important step, however, remains to be taken. The victims and surviving dependents of the attack of the La Belle discotheque in Berlin have been waiting for compensation for the past 17 years. As a reminder, three people — two Americans and one Turkish woman — were killed and 231 seriously wounded, among them 56 American citizens. This was the horrendous result of that bomb attack.

We welcome the initial indications of a fundamental willingness on the part of Libya to compensate victims of that attack as well. We call upon Libya to reach an appropriate settlement with the representatives of the victims and surviving dependents without delay.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): Bulgaria welcomes the adoption of the resolution permitting the lifting of sanctions imposed against Libya, a country with which Bulgaria maintains very close and important relations.

Bulgaria co-sponsored this resolution out of a concern for equity. We have always maintained that once a country under sanctions fulfils the conditions imposed on it by the Council, the sanctions must be lifted. That was the case with Libya, with reference to the letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. at the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Council (S/2003/818) and the joint letter from you, Mr. President, as Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, and the Permanent Representative of the United States (S/2003/819) informing the Council that those conditions had been met.

Bulgaria welcomes the fact that lifting the sanctions will make it possible for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to be fully integrated into international life. We believe that this day may mark a new departure in the relationship between Libya and the international community as a whole.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): Pakistan has voted in favour of this resolution, as it lifts the United Nations sanctions against fraternal Libya. The resolution will also have the effect of dissolving the Libya sanctions Committee and removing this item from the agenda of the Security Council. We are glad that, with today's vote, the sad chapter on Lockerbie and the sanctions against Libya is coming to a close.

Pakistan unequivocally condemns terrorism. Yet, the people of Libya have paid a high price with the sanctions imposed collectively on them. Pakistan has consistently held that sanctions always have unintended consequences. The brotherly people of Libya have faced severe hardship and untold suffering. We are happy that the longstanding suffering of the fraternal Libyan people, under the weight of those sanctions, is now coming to an end.

During negotiations on this resolution, the Council was faced with the challenge of how to address the issue of compensation for the victims of the Union de transports aeriens (UTA) flight. We understand the French position, given the humanitarian aspects of the issue. We are glad that an agreement has been reached between France and the Libyan authorities that has enabled this resolution to move forward. Nevertheless, we would like to note that the primary Charter responsibility of the Security Council is the maintenance of international peace and security. Adjudication of issues such as compensation should appropriately rest with other relevant organs within the United Nations system, as envisaged in the Charter. If that approach had been followed, we could have avoided acrimony, a strain on Council unity and a delay in the final lifting of the sanctions.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation voted in favour of the draft resolution on the full lifting of sanctions against Libya on the basis of its principled position that restrictive measures under Chapter VII of the Charter must immediately cease once all Security Council requirements have been met.

We are convinced that the issue of lifting the sanctions against Libya has long been ripe for consideration. In the past five years Libya has turned over two suspects in the Lockerbie matter for trial, has provided the French judiciary bodies with all the necessary information to complete the trials related to the Union de transports aeriens (UTA) flight and has signed a range of international and regional agreements to counter terrorism. It has also demonstrated repeatedly its commitment to combating this threat to international peace and security. As such, Libya has fully met its commitments under Security Council resolutions 731 (1992) and 748 (1992), creating the necessary prerequisites to fully close this issue.

Despite the suspension of action related to sanction measures by the Council in 1998, the political image of this country has been undermined because we were delayed in resolving the question of lifting the sanctions. We believe it important that the Security Council has been able to take decisions to close the chapter on this complex issue.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic)*: A short time ago we adopted resolution 1506 (2003), something we should have done many years ago.

Syria is pleased at the lifting of sanctions against the fraternal people of Libya. It has voted in favour of the resolution because it was the result of an understanding reached between all the parties concerned. Syria, which has expressed its condolences to the families of the victims, also recognizes that the fraternal people of Libya have suffered a long time because of the siege and the unjust sanctions imposed against them. Syria believes that the Council must not impose sanctions that will adversely impact the civilian population and that will expose children, women and men to suffering under collective sanctions that are unacceptable under international law and the Charter.

Ms. Menéndez (Spain) (*spoke in Spain*): We too recognize the presence of family members of the victims of the tragic terrorist attacks.

Spain welcomes the adoption of resolution 1506 (2003). It not only ends the alienation of a country like Libya from the international community, but it also reflects recognition of an improvement in the relations of that country with the international community. For a country like Spain, which is so clearly committed to the fight against terrorism, the act of proclaiming the renunciation of terrorism as an instrument of political action is a source of great satisfaction.

The assumption of responsibilities by the Libyan regime has also made possible the circumstances necessary for the adoption of this resolution.

We therefore welcome the lifting of the sanctions regime against Libya, which demonstrates that an aspect of international tension has been overcome and which should prompt us to continue to strive for the resolution of other conflicts.

The President: There being no other speakers on my list, I will now make a statement in my capacity as a representative of the United Kingdom.

The bombing of Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie on 21 December 1988 was the worst single terrorist incident on United Kingdom territory. Two hundred and seventy people were murdered, and their families and friends have endured continuing pain and grief.

Since that outrage, the authorities in the United Kingdom have worked carefully and deliberately to bring the Libyan official al-Megrahi to justice for that act. The arrangements for the trial and appeal were made in accordance with the Security Council resolution. The Council also placed sanctions on Libya until certain requirements were met, sanctions being the only means of actually delivering justice.

Libya has now met those requirements. It has accepted responsibility and has agreed to pay a substantial sum of compensation to the relatives of those who were murdered. Libya has agreed to cooperate with any further Lockerbie investigation and has renounced terrorism. Libya's renunciation of terrorism is the first time in the modern era that a State has unequivocally renounced to the United Nations the use of terror as an instrument of policy. As a demonstration of that position, Libya has signed the 12 international conventions on the fight against terrorism. The United Kingdom welcomes Libyan cooperation in the fight against international terrorism.

For all the above reasons, the United Kingdom, with Bulgaria, sponsored and supported the resolution to lift the sanctions on Libya. We expect Libya to abide by the commitments and obligations it has entered into as part of the agreement.

As this case demonstrates, the United Kingdom will pursue those responsible for terrorism. The perpetrators and sponsors will have to account for their actions, however long it takes. Although nothing can bring back those who died in Lockerbie, we hope this decision today — and more importantly, what it represents — will bring some measure of comfort to their relatives and friends. The agreement was the result of patient diplomacy based on clear points of principle and was the culmination of many years of hard work. But it does show that it is possible to find a way through and forward through commitment, dialogue and cooperation.

We welcome the fact that the families of UTA flight 772 have also now been able to reach agreement with the Qadhafi Foundation over further compensation payments.

The United Kingdom condemns terrorism in all its manifestations. There can be no justification for terrorist acts. In that context we also recall the horrific bombing of the La Belle disco in Berlin in 1986. Three people died and over 200 were injured. Three Libyan officials were subsequently found guilty of attempted murder. In complying with the requirements of the Security Council, including on the renunciation of terrorism, Libya has made a continuing commitment to the international community to abide by new standards of behaviour. We urge Libya to demonstrate that commitment now by implementing the agreement with the UTA families in full and by ensuring that full comfort is given to the families of the victims of the La Belle disco. We look forward to the full re-emergence of Libya into the international community.

I now resume my function as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the business on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4821

Security Council

Distr.: General
9 September 2003

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 4821st (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 9 September 2003, at 3.30 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

> "On 9 September 2003, the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B, held its 4821st meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE).
>
> "The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Ethiopia and Eritrea."

United Nations S/PV.4822

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4822nd meeting

Friday, 12 September 2003, 11.15 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir Emyr Jones Parry	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia

Progress report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2003/858)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia

Progress report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2003/858)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the progress report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea, document S/2003/858. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2003/872, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1507 (2003).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4823

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4823rd meeting

Friday, 12 September 2003, 11.35 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir Emyr Jones Parry	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mrs. D'Achon
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Atieh
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

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03-49755 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Italy and Serbia and Montenegro, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Šahović (Serbia and Montenegro) took a seat at the Council table. Mr. Nesho (Albania) and Mr. Spatafora (Italy) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In order to optimize the use of our time, I will not individually invite speakers to take seats at the Council table. When a speaker is taking the floor, the Conference Officer will seat the next speaker on the list at the table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Annabi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I would like to appeal to all those who intend to speak — and it is a very formidable list —for as much brevity as possible, please. And if colleagues have already made points, it would be hugely appreciated, not just by the Chair but by other colleagues, if we could show agreement with what has been said and forego the urge to repeat it. I say that because it is the intention of the presidency, in response to a formal request that we have received, to convene this afternoon at 3 p.m. at the ambassadorial level in formal consultations on the situation in the Middle East. Given the agenda we have today — this is no disrespect whatever to this item — I think a measure of brevity would help us all.

I now invite Mr. Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to brief the Council on the current situation with respect to the item on the agenda.

Mr. Annabi: Thank you, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to brief the Council on developments in Kosovo over the past two months. During this period, Mr. Holkeri took up his responsibilities as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Upon his arrival in Priština, Mr. Holkeri held a first round of meetings with representatives of the Kosovo Provisional Institutions and local political leaders from all communities. Mr. Holkeri also had meetings with the political leadership in Belgrade.

The Special Representative has reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to the "standards before status" policy framework and its focus on progress towards achieving the benchmarks for implementation of this policy. Mr. Holkeri is also preparing an operational plan for the implementation of the benchmarks, which is being drawn up jointly by UNMIK and the Kosovo Provisional Institutions.

Mr. Holkeri has strongly emphasized the importance of initiating direct and constructive dialogue on practical matters of mutual interest between Priština and Belgrade. During his meetings with representatives of the Kosovo Provisional Institutions and the political leadership in Belgrade, Mr. Holkeri sought their respective views on issues relating to the proposed dialogue. He consistently underlined during those discussions that the dialogue should focus on concrete issues which serve the needs of the people and are in the interests of all sides. Preparations for this dialogue are under way, and Mr.

Holkeri is planning to propose modalities for the dialogue in the coming weeks.

With regard to the security situation, the period since July has been characterized by a number of violent attacks and shootings, which have occurred throughout Kosovo, primarily targeting the Kosovo Serb community, as well as UNMIK law enforcement authorities.

As we informed the Council on 13 August, two Kosovo Serb youths were killed and four injured in a shooting incident aimed at those youths, who were swimming in a river near the village of Gorazdevac in the Peć region. On 18 August, a Kosovo Serb male, who had been shot in the head on 11 August, died of his wounds. Two Kosovo Serbs were also injured in a shooting on 26 August at the returns site of Bica, near Klina in the Peć region. On 31 August, four Kosovo Serbs were injured and one killed in an explosive attack in the village of Cernica in the Gnjilane region. UNMIK Police and KFOR have increased security in these areas following the incidents and are continuing to investigate those crimes.

All Kosovo political leaders made statements condemning the attacks and inviting the public to help find the perpetrators. The Special Representative, Mr. Holkeri, called upon them to show greater resolve in calling for an end to violence and in using their authority to support all efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice. The Special Representative has also appealed to the general public to do all it can to assist the law enforcement authorities in efforts to apprehend those responsible for the incidents.

Those violent incidents have further raised feelings of insecurity among Kosovo Serbs, and there have been signs of an increase in inter-ethnic tension. Although protests against the incidents in Kosovo Serb communities have largely been peaceful, there have been instances of intimidation and harassment in both Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb communities. In addition, many regular inter-ethnic meetings and multi-ethnic events have been cancelled or boycotted by Kosovo Serb and/or Kosovo Albanian representatives out of fear for their security. The past two months have also seen an increase in violent incidents directed against UNMIK law enforcement personnel and property. On 3 August, an UNMIK international police officer was murdered in a sniper attack in the northern part of Kosovo. On 6 September, an off-duty Kosovo Police Service (KPS) officer was also murdered near Djakovica. On 10 September, another KPS officer was shot and injured in Priština, and [illegible] person who was with him was killed.

Property used by the police and judiciary, including an UNMIK police station, UNMIK vehicles and the Priština district court, were damaged in explosions and other attacks. No one has claimed responsibility for any of these attacks. The majority of local politicians and representatives of the Provisional Institutions have made statements condemning the incidents.

Some of those attacks came after the conviction, on 16 July, of four former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) members for war crimes committed primarily against fellow Kosovo Albanians during 1998 and 1999. The decision was the first conviction of former KLA members for war crimes. The initial negative reaction among the general public and local media coverage subsided quickly.

On 4 September, inmates of the Dubrava Prison, which is Kosovo's largest detention facility, occupied a prison block in protest against living conditions, and refused to return to their cells, despite reassurances from UNMIK officials that their complaints would be addressed and that no disciplinary action would be taken against them. Following the prison guards' attempt to enter the occupied block, the prisoners set fire to their mattresses. Five prisoners died and a further 16 were injured in the ensuing fire. A police investigation into the incident was launched immediately, and an independent inquiry will look into its causes and provide recommendations.

As regards political developments, owing to the summer recess the period has seen a lull in legislative and Government activity in Priština. The Kosovo Assembly reconvened on 4 September. Since July, the Government has focused on legislative development and the security situation. It has not taken up the initiation of direct dialogue with Belgrade.

On 27 August, the Serbian Parliament endorsed a "declaration on Kosovo and Metohija", and on 5 September the Parliament of Serbia and Montenegro adopted a "resolution on Kosovo and Metohija". Kosovo Albanian leaders were critical of these documents, particularly the references to Kosovo's status. Kosovo Albanian leaders have also stated that such moves have strained chances of direct dialogue with Belgrade. On 3 September the Kosovo Government publicly expressed its concern over the adoption of the Serbian declaration, and stated its intention to build an independent State.

With regard to returns and inter-ethnic relations, although the level of returns remains low, minority returns continue to exceed those in 2002. In the past two months, some promised funding from several major donors was received, and work on returns projects began. In addition, almost 150 cases have been referred to the Rapid Response Returns Facility, which is a joint project by UNMIK and the United Nations Development Programme providing housing reconstruction assistance for individual returnees. The security situation has, however, heightened the level of fear within the Serb community, leading to delays in returns efforts and the possibility that more returns might be postponed until next spring.

Kosovo's political leaders have expressed support for returns, including — as previously reported — through an open letter published on 2 July in Kosovo's major dailies in which they encouraged displaced persons of all ethnicities to return. On 10 July, the Kosovo Assembly also held a session dedicated to minority returns and adopted a resolution backing returns and emphasizing the need for Kosovo's Government to support return and reintegration activities. On 21 August, Kosovo Prime Minister Rexhepi committed to funding 7 million euros for return activities from the 2002 Kosovo Consolidated Budget surplus funds, and emphasized that this contribution by the Provisional Institutions was intended to demonstrate the Government's commitment to minority communities in the wake of the recent security incidents.

Kosovo President Rugova and Prime Minister Rexhepi have also travelled to returns sites to show their public support for the returns process. However, statements and concrete support for returns at the central level have not, by and large, been replicated at the municipal level. Cooperation on returns projects has been productive in a number of municipalities, but the actions of some municipal officials in the areas affected by violence against Kosovo Serbs have not been conducive to reconciliation.

Turning to local self-government, political infighting — primarily between Kosovo Albanian parties — in a number of municipalities continued to negatively affect the ability of local authorities to deliver effective local government. Also, financing for minority communities from municipal budgets remains poor and, as of the end of June, only six of Kosovo's 26 mixed municipalities had met their required fair-share financing levels in the areas of municipal administration, health and education. UNMIK is working with the Kosovo Ministry of Finance and Economy on developing modalities to address this outstanding problem.

In Mitrovica UNMIK has focused on promoting inter-ethnic activities and dialogue. However, Kosovo Serb members of the northern Mitrovica advisory board have not yet started participating officially in the meetings.

With regard to the economy, bids for the two successive sets of tenders for the privatization of socially owned enterprises were opened by the Kosovo Trust Agency on 14 July and 2 September. A total of 24 enterprises have now been tendered for privatization, and the amount in bids received has reached over 29 million euros. On 6 September, the first three contracts for the privatization of socially owned enterprises were signed. On 1 July, the second meeting of the Kosovo stabilization and association process tracking mechanism took place in Priština. During the meeting, European Commission experts, UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions discussed aspects of justice and home affairs, media policy, telecommunications and transport policy, and made recommendations to ensure conformity with established European Union norms and standards.

UNMIK and KFOR have continued to take action against suspected extremist elements in the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). An enquiry is ongoing in order to identify those members of the KPC with possible links to extremist organizations and criminal groups. Following interviews with 50 members of the KPC, a total of 18 officers have been recommended for dismissal. One of the 18 has already resigned and a second has been dismissed for a separate disciplinary offence. The head of the KPC has suspended a further seven of those on the list, referring the cases to UNMIK police for further investigation.

In conclusion, I wish to say that, under Mr. Holkeri's leadership, UNMIK will remain committed to fully implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and to working with all interlocutors to achieve progress on the benchmarks within the "standards before status" policy framework. A priority at this time is to initiate the dialogue on practical matters of mutual concern between Priština and Belgrade. Through that dialogue practical benefits can be realized for the people of Kosovo, with a view to developing an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. Mr. Holkeri is actively engaged in pursuing this matter in consultation with all parties concerned. At the same time, he is trying to manage the competing interests and unilateral pronouncements of parties concerned, which are not always conducive to the initiation of that dialogue. We also remain concerned about the security situation in Kosovo. In that connection, we shall continue to emphasize the need for everyone to do their part in stopping the violence. The Council's continued and active support has been, and will continue to be, crucial in realizing those objectives.

The President: I have 18 speakers on my list. I would like to suggest to colleagues to aim to conclude by 1 p.m. That would actually be quite a sensible objective. If that were acceptable, the logical consequence would allow three minutes, on average, per intervention. I state those two facts, and I will now go through the list. But I shall live in hope.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): I will start right away. First of all, I thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing.

During last month's meeting on this subject we welcomed Mr. Holkeri's assumption of the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo. He has taken over his responsibilities at what no doubt is a difficult and crucial time, given the recent murders in Gorazdevac and increasing ethnic tensions in Kosovo.

In the interest of time, I shall just confine my comments to the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the role that it should play in Kosovo.

UNMIK is a unique mission in many respects. While it is a peacekeeping mission, administration, capacity-building and development are among the vital components of its mandate. Given those responsibilities and its finite resources and capacities, UNMIK therefore needs to develop a clearly focused, but realistic, policy agenda. In developing any policy initiative, UNMIK must consult local government officials and gain their confidence. No such initiatives are likely to succeed fully without the ownership of Kosovar officials.

In that regard, some of the issues UNMIK must urgently address include security and the rule of law. There is also a need to reinvigorate the Transfer Council and to utilize it to incorporate officials from the Provisional Institutions in areas of UNMIK's reserved authority. UNMIK should also allow Kosovo Government officials to manage some of the budgetary and financial responsibilities, in line with chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework. In addition to giving greater autonomy to the Provisional Institutions, UNMIK must also work proactively to promote the socio-economic development and reconstruction of Kosovo. In the long run, all political achievements in Kosovo can easily be undermined by inadequate economic recovery.

The comments I have just made are aimed at enabling UNMIK to improve its performance. At the same time, we will continue to urge UNMIK to make whatever progress that can be made in terms of building confidence between different communities, the return of refugees and the protection of minorities. We also encourage UNMIK to continue to work for greater dialogue, at least initially on administrative matters between Belgrade and Priština. We hope that, in due course, those and other measures will create the necessary environment to begin progress on the difficult, yet important, issue of status.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi for his substantive briefing on the situation in Kosovo. Russia's views on the processes under way in the province are well known, and very much agree with the assessments voiced by Mr. Annabi.

We believe that, despite certain advances that have, to a great extent, been achieved by virtue of international efforts, the situation in the province continues to be a complex one. Implementation is lacking with regard to key requirements of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), particularly with respect to the situation of Kosovo's non-Albanian inhabitants and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. There is neither reliable nor equitable safety for all of the province's population. There is an absence of fundamental freedoms and rights and inter-ethnic tolerance. Only weak efforts are under way to combat local and cross-border crime and corruption.

Regrettably, over the last month Kosovo has once again been engulfed by a crime wave that has clear ethnic underpinnings. The most blatant of those acts was the armed attack of 13 August against Serbian school children in Gorazdevac. Participants in the meeting of the Contact Group held in Moscow on 4 September issued a statement condemning that barbaric act as well as other incidents in Kosovo that have produced victims among the civilian population. Such acts of violence have no justification under any circumstances. Murder is the instrument of terrorism, and those who perpetrate such crimes are murderers. That must be said straight out.

We cannot stand by idly as terrorists attempt to destabilize the situation in individual countries and entire regions. With regard to Kosovo, there is no doubt that this has to do with yet another manifestation of terrorism that, given the realities in Kosovo, is particularly dangerous, as it increases tensions in an already complex inter-ethnic relationship. Such incidents could provoke a chain reaction with extremely negative consequences for a settlement in the province.

We note the steps taken by the international presences aimed at apprehending the criminals and bringing them to trial. We are grateful to the head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Holkeri, for his prompt reactions to events. We are certain that the leaders of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and leading Kosovo politicians will provide active assistance to the investigations and reaffirm in practice their commitment to their declared goal of building a multi-ethnic, democratic society in the province.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General faces complex challenges in restoring the multi-ethnic nature of the province. We support the priorities he has identified, including normalizing the situation in the province, ensuring the rule of law, resolving problems related to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and economic recovery.

Of key importance are the implementation of the principle of standards before status, which seeks to ensure the essential basic democratic conditions in Kosovo and the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to that end. The implementation of these obligations must be under continuous international oversight.

The achievement of these goals will be furthered by the prompt launching, with constructive international assistance, of a direct dialogue between Belgrade and Priština on technical issues of mutual interest. We believe that the primary mediation role in this process must be played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, in close cooperation with the Contact Group and the European Union.

We urge UNMIK to assume a more active and consistent position in countering any manifestations of inter-ethnic intolerance and crime, to stem the growth of radical movements in the province and to consolidate legality there. The meeting in Moscow of the Contact Group, with the involvement of Mr. Holkeri, confirmed the convergence of approaches of all the essential international participants in the settlement towards the order and substance of measures to be taken in this field. We note in particular the clearly established consensus view that any discussion on the future status of Kosovo would be premature at this juncture and that any attempt to prejudice the resolution of this issue would be unacceptable.

For its part, Russia intends actively to continue participating in overall efforts to seek a just, balanced and lasting solution to the Kosovo problem.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank Mr. Annabi for his very factual and comprehensive briefing and to reiterate my country's full support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Holkeri. We again call on all parties to cooperate with him in his extremely complex and difficult task.

As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria fully supports the statement to be made shortly on behalf of the Union by the Ambassador of Italy. As a country of the region, located in close proximity to Kosovo, Bulgaria wishes to make a few additional comments.

Bulgaria once again categorically condemns the acts of violence referred to earlier by Mr. Annabi, in which innocent people, including a police officer, were killed. We convey our condolences to India. Bulgaria believes that all such acts are acts of ethnic violence and that attacks on the representatives of international institutions in the province merely undermine the efforts of local and international actors working for Kosovo's future and to normalize life for all its inhabitants. Bulgaria again recalls that such acts can in no way improve the positions of parties to negotiations, merely delay the normalization process and serve the interests only of the very few who thrive on disorder and organized crime. Violence is surely not in the interests of the legitimate political representatives in Kosovo, much less those of ordinary people.

That is why we believe that the full cooperation of the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government with police investigations and the prosecution of the perpetrators of these acts of violence will provide evidence of their readiness to shoulder the burden of the genuine management of the province's affairs. In this respect, we would recall that Bulgaria remains very interested in the investigation of the murder of Valentin Krumov, a Bulgarian international civil servant killed in Priština in 1999.

Bulgaria continues to follow with interest and concern these acts of ethnic intolerance, which hamper reconciliation among the ethnic communities and the return of refugees to their homes. We believe that the international presence in Kosovo, especially that of the United Nations, must categorically demonstrate to all local actors, regardless of their ethnic origin, that such behaviour and the inspiration of violence are unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the international community.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I will be brief, as you requested, Sir, but I do want to make a couple of points.

First, obviously we deplore and condemn the violence and attacks that have taken place in the last couple of months. I am afraid that this reminds all of us again of the primacy of establishing the rule of law in Kosovo. This is something that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is working hard to achieve and which I hope we all will support.

We believe that the way forward in general is to focus on proceeding with the standards before status approach. This appears to us to be well poised to go ahead. We encourage UNMIK and those involved to move ahead with it. The achievement of the standards that have been set out is essential to a better life for all Kosovars as we move forward and the United States, for its part, will continue to offer technical expertise to support that process.

We also urge the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to convene officials from Belgrade and Priština as soon as possible in order to begin a dialogue on practical matters. We think this is important. These talks should be held primarily at the level of technical experts and deal with practical issues of mutual concern, such as energy and transportation.

I would also like to note that unilateral comments or declarations by neighbouring Governments or parties inside Kosovo about Kosovo's future are premature and unhelpful. Attempts to prejudge final status only distract from the important work at hand of implementing the standards and beginning the direct dialogue on practical matters. That is where the focus should be, we believe. We hope that all leaders of the region will focus on helping Mr. Holkeri as he sets about his very important and complicated new tasks. That certainly is the intention of my Government.

Mrs. D'Achon (France) (*spoke in French*): I also thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for his very thorough briefing. France renews its firm condemnation of the acts of violence carried out in Kosovo this past month. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and certain delegations have categorized those acts as terrorist and their perpetrators as terrorists. Those crimes must not erode our determination to make progress in implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), with the assistance of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and all concerned parties.

We must also continue the fight against organized crime. It is becoming a major scourge, and it constitutes a threat not only to the security of all the inhabitants of Kosovo, but also to regional stability and Europe as a whole.

The firm commitment of the self-governing provisional authorities of Kosovo is crucial to thwart the power of that type of crime. We will judge their ability to exercise their entrusted responsibilities in keeping with specific results.

The renewed violence also means that we need to remain vigilant in terms of the amount of international force for security deployed in Kosovo. KFOR must continue to have sufficient means to meet its mission. I would recall here that France continues to be one of the leading troop contributors in Kosovo and that its soldiers are deployed in very exposed areas.

In that tense context, we reaffirm our full trust in and support for the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General to continue implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). We are convinced that the "standards before status" formula continues to be fully valid. As Mr. Annabi has stated, Mr. Holkeri will shortly make proposals to make those standards more operational. We have full confidence in him to define, together with the self-governing provisional authorities of Kosovo, the best way to advance, without delay, in areas such as the rule of law, public order, respect for minorities and the return of refugees and displaced persons.

Finally, we have full confidence in Mr. Holkeri to define the modalities by which there will at long last be established between Priština and Belgrade a direct, sustained dialogue on practical issues of common interests. We believe that that direct dialogue should help to specifically improve daily lives in Kosovo for all its inhabitants.

Mr. Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation does not want to miss this opportunity to address members of the Council to express our deepest sorrow at the death of a great friend of Mexico, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Mrs. Anna Lindh. It is a deplorable loss, and we join in what other members of the Council have said.

We also thank Mr. Hédi Annabi for his briefing, analysing the latest developments in and prospects for consolidating peace in Kosovo.

Scarcely three weeks ago, the Council examined the topic that we are addressing today. On that occasion, we met as the result of a criminal act aimed against the principle establishing multi-ethnicity as the formula for coexistence within the province. On 26 August, near Klina in the Peć region, another armed attack was carried out against the Serbian minority. On 31 August, there were two explosions in the town of Cernica, leaving one person dead and three wounded. My delegation condemns once again those types of acts and wishes to share its deep concern that those atrocities are recurring themes that we encounter every time that we discuss Kosovo.

For that reason, we wish to say that, in Mexico's opinion, the road to a prosperous and tolerant Kosovo, where law and respect for human rights prevail, is the road that the extremist groups do not want to take. Therefore, those types of acts that promote hatred and anarchy must be stopped.

The international community formed an outstanding strategic alliance with respect to Kosovo. Substantial human and financial resources and political will have been invested in the effort of reconstruction and reconciliation. That effort must be maintained, and we must achieve the objective set by the Security Council.

Therefore, the Council must not confine itself to condemning acts of violence. We must confront the causes that bring them about, as a first step, in order to implement later concrete strategies to prevent their recurrence in the future. Mexico considers that the strategy must be comprehensive, addressing simultaneously questions of education, security, development and the administration of justice.

In the area of education, activities and programmes must be promoted at all levels that foster mutual understanding of cultures, religions and customs and mutual feedback between ethnic groups as a basis for cultural understanding and coexistence. The normalization of life in the province is the responsibility of all Kosovars. There cannot be genuine coexistence while there is mistrust.

Regardless of ethnic origin or religious beliefs, all Kosovars are jointly responsible for forging that inclusive future. Accordingly, we must even more decisively support the promotion of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes under secure and normal conditions.

It is also necessary that the self-governing provisional institutions earn the trust and respect of the entire population, and the only way to do that is to work in accordance with the law, with transparency and a sense of equity and justice. In that context, Mexico has viewed as positive measures the recent suspension of seven members from the Kosovo Protection Corps and the disciplinary action against eight others on suspicions of links to organized crime and extremist groups.

Mexico notes with satisfaction the efforts undertaken by Mr. Harri Holkeri, Head of the United

Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), to initiate soon the Belgrade-Priština dialogue on practical issues. Forging a mechanism for direct dialogue will undoubtedly depend on progress being made in political, social and economic items for mutual understanding among all inhabitants of the province.

In conclusion, I wish to say that the illicit traffic in weapons and the volume of such weapons among the population of Kosovo is a source of concern and should become a cause of major attention by the Council. Mexico believes that the traffic in and the possession of weapons should be restricted to the full extent possible, since their very existence can promote social violence. We therefore welcome the third programme of arms amnesty, organized by the United Nations, which will be held in September.

In Mexico's view, to the extent that there exists in Kosovo a will for dialogue, there will be a future and irrational acts will be relegated to the past.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank Mr. Annabi, whose detailed and comprehensive briefing will help us in our exchange of views on the development of the situation in Kosovo.

Four years after the temporary freezing of Kosovo's status, the record of the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in that province appears mixed, despite Mr. Holkeri's praiseworthy dedication. We must welcome the progress made at the political and administrative levels, but the recovery of the economy, the return of refugees and the restitution of property, as well as the establishment of the rule of law and the problem of security, remain sources of concern.

At the economic level, despite the improvement of the legislative and administrative framework, greater attention must be devoted to job creation and to promoting regional exchanges.

With regard to the return of refugees, the restitution of property and the issue of disappeared persons, we call for a strengthening of ongoing efforts aimed at the proper functioning of established mechanisms. In addition, the absence of dialogue among communities and the increase in inter-ethnic violence, crime and insecurity affect the long-sought restoration of the rule of law. The murders of civilians this summer, which we condemn and deplore, indicate to us that the situation is still not stable. Measures such as strengthening police and judicial structures are a priority. The reorganization and transformation of the Kosovo Protection Corps into a multi-ethnic body specializing in emergency interventions is also in keeping with that obligation.

Furthermore, my delegation notes that, in the framework of improving the current situation prevailing in Kosovo, other elements of key importance must be taken into consideration. Those are, inter alia, the dialogue between Priština and Belgrade; the regional approach; cooperation among UNMIK, Kosovo's elected officials and the Serbia and Montenegro authorities; extending UNMIK's authority throughout the province and, finally, mobilizing the resources essential for Kosovo's harmonious development.

We urge the parties to do their utmost to facilitate the opening of the negotiations planned for this fall between Belgrade and Priština.

Direct dialogue between the Serbian and Albanian communities must not remain wishful thinking; it must become a reality on the ground and be the driving force for peaceful development of the Balkans region.

I cannot conclude without emphasizing the paramount role that the various Kosovar components must play in the quest for solutions to the problems of the province. The effectiveness of the international community's support — which remains necessary — depends on that.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like previous speakers, I shall be brief. At the outset, I thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing, which informed us of Mr. Holkeri's activities in Kosovo. At our last meeting on this item we expressed our satisfaction at the assignment of Mr. Holkeri, who had an outstanding term as President of the General Assembly a number of years ago. We trust that the contacts Mr. Holkeri has established with a broad range of local political officials in Kosovo will bear the fruit wished for by everyone, in conformity with resolution 1244 (1999).

We believe that Kosovo today is at a crucial stage. On the one hand, we note significant progress in achieving a substantial degree of autonomy, especially the gradual transfer of authority and of non-reserved responsibilities, in keeping with chapter 5 of the

Constitutional Framework. That process must continue. However, a series of deplorable acts of violence — all occurring during the period in question — resulting in deaths and injuries would seem to continue to tarnish the process. We condemn those acts of violence in the most emphatic terms.

In addition to voicing our concern at those violent incidents and at crimes against minorities, we should like to say that in our view they must not and cannot derail the peace process. All manifestations of ethnically motivated violence, harassment and discrimination run counter to the achievement of a multi-ethnic Kosovo and violate the spirit of resolution 1244 (1999). We acknowledge the measures undertaken by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to find and bring to justice the perpetrators of those acts. We firmly believe that without the significant and sustainable return of internally displaced persons and refugees, the building of a multi-ethnic democratic society capable of integrating all of Kosovo's inhabitants is impossible.

We agree with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the implementation of a plan to operationalize the points of reference within the framework of the "standards before status" policy, and, in relation to Kosovo's final status, we call on the parties to avoid any implicit or explicit form of provocation.

Finally, we urge the parties to deepen and broaden the dialogue. We welcome Mr. Holkeri's statements concerning closer dialogue between Belgrade and Priština. Without that dialogue — or without dialogue between UNMIK and the Kosovo Assembly — the achievement of concrete results with respect to the major challenges is a distant prospect.

I hope I have kept within three minutes, Mr. President.

Ms. Menéndez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Many thanks to Mr. Annabi. Italy will speak shortly on behalf of the European Union, so I shall confine myself to making three points.

First, less than a month ago, we met here and condemned the terrorist crime against Kosovo Serb children. Regrettably, we note that ethnic and political acts of violence have not ceased. We hope that the perpetrators will be prosecuted and convicted. The crimes committed cannot go unpunished. Kosovo's future depends on the establishment of security. Security is important for economic recovery, but it is also essential for building a democratic and tolerant society and for the process of the return of Kosovo's citizens of non-Albanian origin. In that connection, we hope that the open letter inviting displaced persons to return to Kosovo will translate into a reality.

Secondly, we hope that Mr. Holkeri enjoys success at the head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). He has our full support, but obviously he must also have the support and cooperation of the Priština and Belgrade authorities. We reiterate once again that we fully agree with the policy promoted by UNMIK, in conformity with the "standards before status" principle.

Thirdly and finally, we find the public statements of the political leaders to be very disturbing. Positions that are contrary to resolution 1244 (1999) cannot in any way be allowed to be publicly and constantly promoted. We condemn any attempt to create mono-ethnic institutions, and we call for the dismantling of any still-functioning parallel administrative structures. We must actively encourage participation in the Assembly and the Transfer Council by Kosovars of non-Albanian origin.

Spain hopes to see the appeal made in Thessaloniki for dialogue between Belgrade and Priština become a reality. The leaders of both parties must stop placing preconditions on that dialogue and must begin it as soon as possible.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): First of all, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and to thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing, which provided us with an update on the situation in Kosovo.

We regret that the meaningful progress achieved at the institutional level by the political process in Kosovo, with the gradual transfer of competencies to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, is not matched by similar progress in the security sphere. The complex situation still faced by Kosovo is a matter of some concern.

My delegation strongly condemns the recent acts of violence. As briefed by Mr. Annabi this morning, the murder of children and the daily intimidation of vulnerable persons are an attack against the crucial process of democratic reforms. Those acts must not be allowed to undermine the peace process and the efforts to build a multi-ethnic and democratic society in Kosovo. We appeal for an immediate end to violence.

We would like to underline that it is the responsibility of Kosovo leaders to decisively curb ethnic violence. We urge them to work with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) with a view to improving the security situation in Kosovo, particularly through the strengthening of local police and by adopting measures to fight organized crime.

We welcome the efforts undertaken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Contact Group to stop the cycle of violence. In that regard, we deem it very important to push forward the disarmament of the population, taking advantage of the synergies provided by the amnesty programme recently started by UNMIK, which allows the citizens of Kosovo who possess illegal weapons to surrender them to law enforcement authorities. It is clear that the proliferation of weapons fosters violence, organized crime and terrorism.

It is important to continue to strengthen the rule of law, to support the return of refugees, to push forward on respect for minority rights and to press on with economic development. Those goals should continue to serve as priorities and should be promoted by all parties in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework in order to build a multi-ethnic and tolerant community with a solid economic foundation and functioning democratic institutions.

My delegation also expresses its hope that the parties will deepen their commitment to democratic values and the rule of law; that the meaningful, constructive dialogue between Belgrade and Priština on practical matters of mutual interest takes place and will be further expanded to include political issues; and that concrete results are achieved without much delay.

To conclude, we wish to reiterate our full support for the "standards before status" policy. Its postulated targets are essential to the political process designed to determine Kosovo's future in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999), establishing a multi-ethnic and democratic society.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): First, let me thank Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi for his concise and very useful briefing. I should also like to point out that I associate myself with the statement that will be made by the Italian presidency of the European Union at a later stage in this meeting.

The series of violent incidents over the past weeks highlights the urgency of dialogue and reconciliation in Kosovo. We should not allow the actions of a few extremists and criminals to divert us from the task of creating a stable, peaceful and democratic Kosovo.

The leaders in the region have condemned the violence and say that they want to be responsible partners of the international community and join the European institutions as soon as possible. But they have so far failed to take many of the difficult steps necessary to realize their ambitions, above all the full implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

We are disappointed that the recent declaration on Kosovo passed by the Parliament of Serbia laid the blame for the failure to implement resolution 1244 (1999) solely on the side of the ethnic Albanians. Clearly, both sides have failed to meet their obligations. For example, the creation of illegal parallel structures in northern Kosovo and in Serbian enclaves elsewhere has been a major impediment to implementing resolution 1244 (1999). Moreover, it was disappointing that the parliamentary declaration said nothing about the interests and needs of the ethnic Albanians, who make up the overwhelming majority of the residents of Kosovo.

On the other hand, we urge the representatives of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo to continue to speak out against violence, to do more to promote ethnic tolerance and to encourage the acceptance of the rule of law. That is the only way to create a more favourable climate for refugee returns. Ending violence and ethnic intimidation is the most important element of progress. Another critical element is the need for direct dialogue between Priština and Belgrade about how they can best cooperate on practical issues. We hope that this dialogue will begin soon. This does not mean the talks about the final status of Kosovo, which can take place only when standards of democratic practice and ethnic tolerance have been achieved.

We have high expectations for the programme of action of the new Special Representative of the

Secretary-General, and we fully support his priorities. In that connection, we are eager to receive the operationalized benchmarks and work plan, which will lay out the concrete tasks to be achieved over the coming months.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would also like to thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing containing up-to-date and very useful information. On 18 August 2003, the Security Council, in complete unanimity, condemned the unjustifiable and often lethal incidents described by Mr. Annabi. The Council firmly called for finding the perpetrators and bringing them to justice so that they can be held accountable for their crimes. I welcome the mobilization that seems to be growing among the population today, to help the police in their investigations.

I also recall that on 3 July 2003, Mr. Steiner presented to the Council the most recent report of the Secretary-General on Kosovo (S/2003/675). It was an exhaustive assessment of the efforts of the United Nations to normalize the situation in the province. That assessment, although largely positive, did include some reasons for concern due to certain problems that Mr. Steiner underlined in his introductory briefing on that day. Those problems have grown since then, as we noted in Mr. Annabi's statement today. My delegation believes that those problems stem from the persistence of intolerance, hatred and instinctual reactions based on identity, which fuel partisan rivalry, injustice, violence and, as a result, insecurity.

The population of Kosovo dreams of peace and a reconciled society of solidarity that shares a common vision of happiness. As well, as the Council observed on the ground last month, the population is aware of the international community's firm commitment and of the enormous sacrifices its men and women make out of goodwill. Those men and women work with the population day by day with determination to ensure the stabilization and reconstruction of Kosovo and the reconciliation of the entire population. Establishing a safe environment that has been disarmed and demined, ensuring protection and freedom of movement, facilitating the return of refugees and displaced persons, creating conditions for a lasting settlement of the problem — I could go on, but Council members are well aware that these issues are the tasks set forth in resolution 1244 (1999). All of those objectives disturb the extremists on all sides, who are pleased only when the situation is confused and out of control.

It is the United Nations that has established conditions that have given rise to, or strengthened, the hopes and dreams of the Kosovars. Over and above the duties imposed on it by the Charter, the Organization has a specific moral commitment to successfully conclude its mission in Kosovo. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri, has stated that the incidents in question will only strengthen our resolve to establish the rule of law for the people of Kosovo.

In this regard, the Special Representative needs the firm support of the United Nations if he is to be successful in addressing the priorities for 2003 that his predecessor, Mr. Steiner, set out and that the Council welcomed. Kosovo is at a delicate stage and the Security Council, with the customary support of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his Special Representative, must tailor its strategy and the modalities of its implementation by ensuring that its activities in the province are focused on the long term. We must therefore ensure that we know what the people of Kosovo truly want and find appropriate solutions that will enable us, without acting hastily, to resolve the problem of the final status of Kosovo.

My delegation would like to reaffirm its commitment to the principle of "standards before status" and to the virtues of direct dialogue among all the parties concerned. In this regard, we agree with Mr. Holkeri that such dialogue should be focused on specific issues, and we look forward to the proposals for modalities for that dialogue. My delegation also reaffirms its commitment to a multi-ethnic and multicultural Kosovo nourished by the human values of tolerance and harmony and watered by the source of democratic values and respect for human rights.

My delegation appeals to all the elements of Kosovo society and all other political actors in the subregion to pool their efforts with those of UNMIK so as to prevent the further stirring up of negative emotions and to work to restore peace, security and prosperity for all.

In conclusion, I would like to say how much my country appreciates the impressive job being done on the ground by Mr. Holkeri and his entire team. I reaffirm the support of Cameroon for their efforts to implement resolution 1244 (1999).

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to thank Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his detailed and useful briefing on the most recent developments in the situation in Kosovo. My delegation believes that, despite the relative stability of the situation in Kosovo, the security situation must be further strengthened if we are to prevent a repetition of the events of last month that led to the killing of a number of Serbs in Kosovo. Such events could, in turn, lead to ethnically motivated acts of violence, which would undermine all the progress made thus far.

My delegation reiterates the importance of the rule of law and the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities in Kosovo, as well as the need to combat organized crime and smuggling and to prevent illicit trafficking in arms and drugs.

My delegation also reiterates the importance of the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes and property in Kosovo so that they can contribute to the economic reconstruction of the province. The concerted efforts of all of the people of Kosovo will be required if they are to leave their problems behind.

My delegation encourages continued dialogue between Belgrade and Priština with a view to dealing with the practical matters pertaining to the stabilization of the situation in Kosovo and the facilitation of the political process. We welcome the efforts of Mr. Holkeri in this regard.

We support the principle of "standards before status". We welcome Mr. Holkeri's reaffirmation that he will pursue his work in accordance with that principle with a view to building in Kosovo a multi-ethnic society that is capable of coping with future challenges.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its support for Mr. Harri Holkeri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo. We express our readiness to cooperate with him and with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo in order to achieve security and stability in the province.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his briefing. The Chinese delegation has been closely observing the development of the situation in Kosovo. We are deeply concerned about the frequent occurrence of incidents of terrorism and violence recently, which have caused a serious deterioration in the security situation. We urge the parties concerned to find out the truth as soon as possible and bring to justice the perpetrators of those acts.

We call on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, KFOR and the Kosovo Provisional Institutions to make further efforts to strengthen law and order, combat organized crime and ensure the security of all ethnic groups in Kosovo, especially the Serbs. That is the only way to create the necessary conditions for the achievement of such goals as the return of refugees and economic development.

China believes that the fundamental resolution of the question of Kosovo will require consultation and dialogue between Belgrade and Priština with a view to reaching agreement on practical matters, such as the return of refugees and the rights of minorities and missing persons, and thereby establishing a foundation for the ultimate settlement of the question of the status of Kosovo. Such achievements would also be conducive to the peace and stability of the entire Balkan region.

To that end, we hope that the two parties concerned will, on the basis of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), initiate constructive dialogue as soon as possible on those questions and, with the help of the international community, achieve concrete results.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I should like to make six points. First, I associate myself with the comments to be made soon by the Italian presidency of the European Union. Secondly, we encourage the very early launch of the Belgrade-Priština dialogue and look forward to practical proposals from the Special Representative, who enjoys our full support. Thirdly, normalization is the best way forward. There is too much political rhetoric on both sides. Unilateral attempts to pre-empt the status issue are not helpful; resolution 1244 (1999) is the way forward.

Fourthly, the immediate priority is standards. I associate myself with those who say that it must very clearly be "standards before status". It is important in that respect to establish benchmarks. Fifthly, as we gear up for those discussions between Priština and Belgrade, the security situation must be a priority. Strengthening the rule of law and building the indigenous capacity of the Kosovo Police Service are vital if we are going to increase the role of, and enforce, law and order.

My last point is simply to say that tackling corruption, extremism and organized crime is a crucial element in building up the multi-ethnic, prosperous Kosovo that we seek. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo has got a lot of work in hand on that issue, but it is quite striking that the internal market in organized crime in that part of the world is much more effective than is the internal market in legitimate goods and services. That situation has to be reversed if the region is to attain its goal of approaching Euro-Atlantic standards.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

I have three speakers still on my list. The next speaker is the representative of Serbia and Montenegro, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Šahović (Serbia and Montenegro): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of September, as well as to thank you for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing.

In recent months the Security Council has held a series of discussions that have mostly been devoted to the escalation of violence and ethnically motivated crimes in Kosovo and Metohija. The need for that was obvious. In July, the Kosovo Force (KFOR) reported an increased number of incidents, stating that the Serbian population was the primary target of intimidation. Regrettably, we witnessed even worse crimes in August, including a bomb attack in the village of Cernica on 31 August that killed Milomir Stakic and wounded four other civilians. We view the further deterioration of the security situation with extreme concern, particularly bearing in mind the fact that neither the perpetrators of the Gorazdevac atrocity of 13 August, the killers of the Serb fisherman Dragan Tonic, who was killed on 11 August in Skulanovo, nor the Cernica bombers, have been apprehended. We also regret that those responsible for the 3 August murder of UNMIK police officer Satish Menon have not been found.

The new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri, assumed his responsibilities and clearly difficult tasks against that background. He has yet to settle in Priština, but we can already discern his resolve to confront the existing problems. We welcome Mr. Holkeri's priorities to establish the rule of law, ensure basic rights and freedoms, fight organized crime, build multi-ethnic institutions and enhance economic development as basic preconditions for lasting stability in the province. In particular, my Government welcomes the new Special Representative's commitment to promptly address the security situation, especially violence against the Serb community. We share his view that the motive for the latest attacks was to send the message that multi-ethnicity would not be allowed to take hold in the province. We support Mr. Holkeri's position that the international community must be resolute in its stand that it will not be intimated from fulfilling the mandate of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

It is encouraging that the international community has demonstrated, at several high-level meetings during the last few days, a common dedication to ending the cycle of violence and extremism. In that regard, we are looking forward to concrete measures against the Albanian National Army (ANA), which in April was proclaimed by UNMIK to be a terrorist organization, as well as to the findings of the special UNMIK/KFOR board set up last spring to coordinate action against suspected extremist infiltration in the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC).

It is our sincere hope that that decisiveness with regard to improving the security situation will boost the thus far highly unsatisfactory pace in the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Perhaps it was on the basis of renewed hope for minority protection that the 200 remaining Serbs in Cernica — the venue of the aforementioned attack on 31 August — decided to stay in the province. However, we fear that, if crimes and terrorist acts continue with impunity, any future decision by the Serb community to leave Kosovo and Metohija permanently may be irreversible.

My Government welcomes the renewed engagement of the Contact Group on the issue of Kosovo and Metohija. We find particularly important the Contact Group's confirmation in Moscow of the relevance of the principle of "standards before status" and of the need to make the benchmarks concept operational, as well as the emphasis on continuous international control of the implementation of related requirements. Serbia and Montenegro is looking forward to the Contact Group's further activities. In that context, we wish to establish regular dialogue with the Group in order to continue to contribute to the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) as well as, more broadly, to the stabilization of the region.

The Security Council, the Contact Group and Special Representative Holkeri are calling for an early start of dialogue between Belgrade and Priština. Serbia and Montenegro stands fully ready to engage constructively in all discussions of importance to the daily lives of all citizens of Kosovo and Metohija, regardless of their ethnicity. We expect that the talks, within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), will help to improve the security situation in the province, enhance human and minority rights and, consequently, step up the returns process. Mr. Holkeri's role in those talks is extremely important, as is the support of the Contact Group and the European Union in this process.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that Serbia and Montenegro has recently reconfirmed at the highest parliamentary level its commitment to the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) and its fundamental aim of building a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo and Metohija, one in which all inhabitants can have a peaceful and normal life based on substantial autonomy and meaningful self-government.

The President: The next speaker under rule 37 is the representative of Italy and of the Italian presidency. I give him the floor.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, have declared that they align themselves with this statement.

The European Union reiterates its strong condemnation of the brutal killings and violence that took place in Kosovo during August and September against a United Nations police officer and against Kosovars of both Serbian and Albanian ethnicity. In expressing our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of India, we are also confident that no efforts are being spared to arrest the perpetrators and bring them to justice. The European Union believes that everybody in Kosovo must understand that the time for violence is over and that such deplorable incidents can only undermine the image of Kosovo in Europe and in the international community.

We therefore welcome the arrival in Kosovo of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri. We would like to reaffirm our strong support for him in the challenging task of ensuring full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which continues to be the cornerstone of the international community's commitment to Kosovo.

In that regard, we very much appreciate the briefing given to the Council by Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi. He has given us a very clear-cut picture of where we stand and of the way forward.

We also would like to urge all concerned in Kosovo and in the region to cooperate in a constructive manner with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General on fully implementing resolution 1244 (1999) while refraining from unilateral acts and statements that risk jeopardizing the goal of a stable, multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo.

The European Union fully supports the United Nations weapons amnesty programme launched on 1 September by Mr. Holkeri and shares his views that "the people of Kosovo should seize this opportunity to help themselves while helping Kosovo" and that "the values of tolerance and democracy are the foundation of a free society".

Kosovo must comply with international and European standards as soon as possible. That goal can be achieved only through the active cooperation of all the stakeholders in Kosovo and the region. We therefore urge the leadership in Belgrade and Priština to launch without further delay a direct dialogue on practical issues of mutual interest. That is a prerequisite to building mutual confidence, as was announced at the European Union's Western Balkans summit held at Thessaloniki on 21 June.

The European Union will ensure that Kosovo's European prospects are not held back by the final status issue. Before addressing that issue, however, a democratic, multi-ethnic and multicultural Kosovo guaranteeing full respect for the rule of law and for human and minority rights will have to be built. To that end, the European Union reiterates its support for the "standards before status" strategy, which now needs to become operational.

The European Union is also firmly committed to supporting Kosovo's economic recovery and development, including the privatization process, as an indispensable measure for ensuring the normalization and development of society. At the same time, we would like to see progress on decentralization and on the return process, where there is still an urgent need for concrete measures to be taken by the competent authorities, both at the central and local levels.

The President: I call on the representative of Albania.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): At the outset, Sir, allow me to express our delegation's appreciation for your commitment to the problems of our region and to commend your work as the President of the Security Council for the month of September.

Let me also thank Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his comprehensive briefing today.

The issue of Kosovo has been broadly discussed in the Security Council. This reflects the commitment and the seriousness of the international community in implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and ensuring a sustainable democratic future for Kosovo.

The attention that the Kosovo issue has attracted constitutes a positive factor that has accelerated the rhythm of significant transformations towards a multi-ethnic, democratic society. While evaluating the current situation in Kosovo, as a result of considerable transformations due to the commendable work of the United Nations and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, we are confident in saying that substantial progress has been achieved. This conclusion has been realistically highlighted by the members of the Security Council and reflected in the reports of the Secretary-General as well.

It is important to put special emphasis on the establishment and functioning of the new Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, which are a clear indication of growing political maturity and responsibility. There is an improved inter-ethnic environment as well, as has been demonstrated, for instance, by the appeal of the Kosovar leaders to all displaced persons to return to Kosovo and to participate in the democratic processes and in the responsibility to rebuild together a new, multi-ethnic, free and democratic society.

The latest incidents in Kosovo are tragic and intolerable. They should be explicitly condemned and considered to be acts of an agonizing violent past that cannot halt the democratic processes and the irreversible new realities. However, these incidents cannot be condemned either by denying the substantial progress in Kosovo or by using it for political, electoral and nationalist interests. That would impede the beginning of the necessary dialogue between Priština and Belgrade, to the accomplishment of which the whole international community is committed.

Today, Kosovo needs confidence-building measures and not a conflict-feeding process. Finding itself between opportunities and difficulties, problems and solutions, Kosovo requires all of us to become part of the solution and the progress. The far-sighted policy of the European Union to include Kosovo as an inseparable part of the regional reality, drawn up at the Thessaloniki summit, creates real grounds for its rapid integration, first, into the regional community, and then into the European family.

The improvement of stability and progress suggests the need for the Kosovar leadership to take part in the discussions of this body on Kosovo so that it may share responsibilities and be fully committed to the implementation of Security Council decisions.

The Albanian Government has always appreciated the important work of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Kosovo and is thankful for the extraordinary results achieved in a relatively short period of time. The Albanian Government commends the appointment of Mr. Harri Holkeri as Special Representative and will support his activity. My Government strongly believes that his mission will be carried out successfully and contribute to the further development of Kosovo and the implementation of the necessary standards before status.

Albania has encouraged the political leaders in Kosovo and Belgrade to give concrete expression to their commitment to initiate a dialogue on technical issues. My Government considers unacceptable and unhelpful every effort that goes beyond the stabilizing framework of the dialogue and increases the spirit of conflict in the region.

The dialogue between the two parties and the collaboration of mutual interests towards economic development and regional integration will bring an understanding of new realities. People can be ruled not by the mentality of territories, but by that of respect for their right to self-determination, freedom and democracy — ideas that shape modern Europe today.

The President: There are no more speakers on my list.

I thank my colleagues for their contributions, especially Assistant Secretary-General Annabi — not just for his contribution, but also for what it represents in terms of the work that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo does.

We have all shown today, I think, our clear support for the Special Representative. Resolution 1244 (1999) remains the basis of policy and there has been a clear emphasis on standards before status. As for dialogue, most speakers have endorsed what is taking place and expressed the imperative of tackling the security situation and of stabilizing things. The recent attacks have been condemned by just about everybody.

We have thus concluded the Security Council's consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations **S/PV.4824**

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4824th meeting

Monday, 15 September 2003, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir Emyr Jones Parry	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

Letter dated 12 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/880)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 12 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/880)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gillerman (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Listre (Argentina), Mr. Dauth (Australia), Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Nambiar (India), Mr. Jenie (Indonesia), Mr. Spatafora (Italy), Mr. Haraguchi (Japan), Mr. Goussous (Jordan), Mr. Rastam (Malaysia), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Hachami (Tunisia), Mr. Cengizer (Turkey) and Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 12 September 2003 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2003/886 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held on Monday, 15 September, regarding the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Roed-Larsen to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to inform the Council also that I have received a letter dated 12 September from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "We would like to kindly request the inscription of His Excellency Mr. Yaya Mahmassani, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, on the list of speakers for the meeting to be held on Monday, 15 September 2003."

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2003/887.

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Yaya Mahmassani.

There being no objection, I invite Mr. Yaya Mahmassani to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 15 September 2003 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to request that I be invited to participate in the debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

On previous occasions, the Security Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In accordance with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Papa Louis Fall, to take a seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 12 September 2003 from the representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/880).

Before we actually go into the order of speakers, could I just state the blinding obvious, which is that we are going to have three substantial contributions to begin with . That will be followed by contributions by members of the Council. Currently we have about 24 other speakers actually inscribed and my expectation is that that list may well increase.

So, in the interest of trying to make this into an orderly meeting of, I hope, appropriate length today, I have asked the three principal speakers who will begin the debate to confine their remarks to 15 minutes in duration. After that, I am in the hands of members of the Council, but my earnest plea would be that brevity all around would, I think, help us substantially. I will, when it comes to extending the debate beyond the members of the Council, look for advice from colleagues as to whether or not a guillotine on the duration of contributions would be in order, if indeed we have so many speakers.

Having said that, we will now move on to hear a briefing by Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Roed-Larsen: I am disappointed to report that since the last briefing to the Security Council on 19 August, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has stalled. The recent cycle of terror attacks and extrajudicial killings has broken the Palestinian ceasefire and brought the process to a standstill. A combination of violence and the too slow implementation of the road map peace plan have brought the region to a potential turning point. We are today confronted, once again, with the question of whether the parties will recommit themselves to peace or whether the long, debilitating conflict will grind on. I am concerned that, without a major change in the situation on the ground, further deterioration, resulting in major bloodshed, will be inevitable.

The month since the last briefing has been dispiriting for all of us who hope that the road map will provide a path to peace. On the day of that briefing, 19 August, shock and sadness enveloped the United Nations on hearing of the savage bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. The tragic deaths of our colleagues and friends there was compounded by news of a another cruel suicide bombing in Jerusalem in which 23 people — 20 Israelis and 3 foreigners — many of them women and children, were killed. That bombing occurred after two operations of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) that resulted in the death of 4 Palestinians.

In the aftermath of that terror attack, the Government of Israel declared "an all-out war against Hamas and other terrorist elements" in the occupied Palestinian territory. That war has involved a stepped-up campaign of attempted extrajudicial killings of Hamas leaders. Since 19 August violence has increased, and the fragile process that began with the presentation of the road map to the parties and the Aqaba summit has been severely set back.

Late last week, after two suicide bombings on 9 September, the Government of Israel announced that its Security Cabinet had decided in principle to remove Palestinian Authority President Arafat "in a manner and at a time of its choosing". Mr. Arafat is democratically elected, and as such, the legitimate leader of the Palestinians. He embodies Palestinian identity and national aspirations. He is far from irrelevant.

Since the last briefing to the Security Council, 81 people have lost their lives to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — 38 Israelis and 43 Palestinians. This raises the death toll since September 2000 to 2,808 Palestinians and 830 Israelis. This death toll is particularly disappointing and sad in the light of the dramatically reduced toll of the last reporting period when a ceasefire was in effect.

During the current reporting period, Israel has been hit with three suicide bomb attacks. These attacks broke the ceasefire that was declared by Palestinian groups and brokered by the leadership of the Palestinian Authority and Egyptian negotiators. The 19 August and two 9 September attacks killed a total of 38 people. The Secretary-General has consistently condemned such acts of terrorism, emphasizing that they are heinous, immoral, indefensible and contrary to international humanitarian law. The deliberate targeting of civilians cannot be justified to advance any cause.

We call on the Palestinian Authority to bring to justice those who plan and carry out such attacks and to live up to its obligations regarding security under the road map.

Both during and after the unilateral ceasefire Israel continued to carry out extrajudicial killings aimed at the leaders of Palestinian militant groups. The United Nations has repeatedly and strongly called on the Government of Israel to cease such attacks. Our basic principled opposition to extrajudicial killings is compounded by the frequency with which such operations are carried out with disproportionate force in densely populated civilian areas, killing and injuring civilian bystanders in contravention of international humanitarian law. Israel has an obligation as the occupying Power to ensure the safety of Palestinian civilians.

We recognize Israel's legitimate right to defend its people against terrorist attacks, but that right must be carried out using proportionate force and strictly in keeping with Israel's international humanitarian law obligations.

Unfortunately, implementation of the road map never effectively began. I am afraid, viewing the situation with hindsight, that we moved too slowly and with only incremental steps at the initial stages of implementation. What was necessary were bold steps that could have produced support on both sides for the process.

Neither side has seriously and actively addressed the core concerns of the other side. For Israelis, that concern is security and freedom from terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, the Palestinian Authority failed again to grasp control of the security situation. The unilateral ceasefire declared by Palestinian militant groups was a useful step, but other steps such as the consolidation of security forces and security reforms could have been taken. For Palestinians, the core concern is an assurance that the peace process will lead to the end of the occupation and the establishment of a viable, independent Palestinian State on the basis of the 1967 borders. The ongoing settlement activity and continued construction of the separation wall cause Palestinians to wonder whether we are moving in a direction opposite to that goal. In addition, Israel has never fully endorsed the road map.

Thus, the two key issues in the peace process are terrorism and occupation. Virtually all relevant actors have agreed that both need to end in order to achieve a just and lasting settlement. The road map addresses both. But the very limited approach to implementing the road map never effectively tackled either issue. Not only must progress be made on each, but progress must be seen to be occurring by Israelis and Palestinians alike in order to develop and maintain public support for the peace process. Real action must therefore be taken to end terrorism and to end occupation. Without popular support no Palestinian Prime Minister can, at this stage, counter terrorism and terrorist organizations in an effective manner. That essential public support could best be achieved under the current circumstances through the abandonment of settlements. The continued expansion of settlement activities produces the opposite effect. In such an environment, it would not be possible for the Palestinian Authority to move forward with political and security measures to counter terrorism and terrorist groups.

The principle of parallelism, reciprocal steps taken by both parties in all fields, is a core concept of the road map. The weakness of the past four months of half-hearted implementation by both sides is that parallelism was not emphasized. As a result, a single but essential issue — security of the Israelis from terrorism — became the sole focus of road map implementation. The ineffective way in which the issue was addressed contributed significantly to stalling the peace process. That single focus has allowed violent groups to set the pace and the agenda for the process. We must reassert the principle of parallelism by beginning to end both terrorism and occupation. In that way, control will be taken out of the hands of those who would use violence to prolong the conflict.

Before the establishment of the Quartet and the release of the road map, the prerequisites for restarting a peace process were clear. The first was the creation of an international mechanism, a consensus-based coalition of States and institutions that would put an internationally supported peace plan on the table and guide the parties through a process. The second prerequisite was a plan that would set the end point of the process: the establishment of a viable, independent Palestinian State, comprehensive regional peace and security for Israel. Finally, the situation required the appointment of an empowered and credible Palestinian prime minister, to be a partner for peace and to whom consolidated security services would report.

Despite the recent setbacks, we still have the international mechanism, the Quartet — composed of the European Union, the Russian Federation, the United Nations and the United States — which needs to redouble its efforts. The Quartet's envoys have met frequently to address the current crisis, the latest meeting being in Geneva two days ago. We still have the plan: the road map. However, there is for the moment no Palestinian prime minister for the Quartet and the Israelis to work with.

An honourable and peace-minded prime minister has resigned and the new nominee has not yet, unfortunately, been able to take up the reins of power. The rapid appointment and confirmation of a credible and fully empowered Palestinian prime minister is an essential step to address the current dangerous situation. That prime minister should focus on establishing law and order and ending terror and violence by disarming militant groups. He must express full commitment to a policy of non-violence and to the road map.

The Quartet and key regional partners — Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and others — can do much to help a new prime minister succeed and mobilize the necessary popular support. In doing so, the international community must address the central issues animating this conflict: occupation and terrorism. It is clear that without significant Israeli concessions, related particularly to settlements and the separation wall, neither the peace process nor any peace-minded Palestinian leader will be credible in the eyes of the Palestinian people. Without a credible Palestinian leader, it will be difficult for the Palestinian Authority to take the necessary steps of consolidating security forces, disarming militant groups and establishing law and order.

Determined international engagement is now urgently required. The Quartet is the pre-eminent diplomatic mechanism for Middle East peacemaking, and its continued active involvement is indispensable. The Quartet principals — the United Nations Secretary-General, Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov, United States Secretary of State Powell and, for the European Union, High Representative Solana — have agreed to meet later this month here in New York to address all relevant issues. That meeting will be significant because of the critical situation in the region. The Quartet will review the implementation of the road map and attempt to devise ways of putting the process back on track.

I wish to note that the road map contains provisions for the acceleration or the slowing down of the process. Given the current situation, it might be appropriate to speed up the road map process. Bold steps related to settlements and security and involving increased activity from the international community might be necessary in order to improve the environment and assist in jump-starting a resumption of the process.

In each briefing to the Security Council, the Secretariat has provided an update on the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. We are again compelled to report a continued deterioration in the living conditions of the people of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Due to the continually volatile security situation, the ongoing Israeli regime of closures and movement restrictions continues to devastate the Palestinian economy and impoverish the Palestinian people.

Currently, donors are providing upwards of $1 billion per annum in the form of budgetary and emergency support to the Palestinians. The objective has been both to prevent the economy from collapsing under the weight of closures and movement restrictions and to keep alive the hope of reconciliation and peace. Should the present situation result in the Palestinian Authority being unable to function politically, a critical question is whether the donors would be willing to continue that level of support.

Much depends on the effectiveness of a new Palestinian Authority Government and especially on Minister of Finance Salam Fayyad, in whom donors have great confidence because of his efforts to promote financial accountability and transparency. If political developments result in the suspension or even the disestablishment of the Palestinian Authority, it might make it impossible to continue that work.

If that happens, the result would be the suspension of budgetary support to the Palestinian Authority. That could mean that up to 120,000 civil servants, each of whom supports an extended family of about eight persons and whose spending power is sustaining the economy, would no longer be paid. In the face of declining donor assistance, Israel would be responsible for meeting the basic needs of the civilian population.

We remain concerned by the continued construction of the West Bank security fence or separation wall. Of course, Israel has every right to set up security structures on its own territory, but it is not by any standard acceptable to put up a separation wall on another people's land. Its construction proceeds apace, and large parts of the occupied Palestinian territory are physically divided from other parts. People are separated from farms, schools and livelihoods and are having their lands confiscated.

Despite the calls from all the members of the Quartet, the Government of Israel persists in building that structure. It makes the establishment of a viable Palestinian State more difficult and the hope of peace more distant, and it undermines any Palestinian prime minister's efforts to muster popular support.

I turn now to the situation along the Blue Line. Since the last briefing to the Security Council, the situation has remained tense. On 3 September, Israeli jets violated Lebanese airspace. Shrapnel from ensuing Hizbullah anti-aircraft fire ignited agricultural land close to populated areas on the Israeli side of the Blue Line. Shortly afterwards, Israeli jets dropped two bombs on a Hizbullah position close to a village. The Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) issued a statement expressing his deep concern over the Israeli air raid and saying that UNIFIL would continue to monitor the situation closely. As we have stated in the past, a violation on one side does not justify a violation from the other side.

Those events illustrate clearly the escalatory potential and the dangers involved. We call again upon the Governments of Lebanon and Israel, therefore, to live up to their responsibilities, to exercise restraint and to refrain from all such violations of the Blue Line in order to avoid a deterioration of the situation on the ground.

There is a need for the parties to recommit to the road map process because there is no alternative to its explicit goals: the end of the occupation that started in 1967; the end of terrorism; and the establishment of a State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security. But the lack of trust between the parties and their inability to take the difficult steps necessary to implement the road map illustrate the need for continued and possibly increased activity on the part of the international community to move the process along. We find ourselves at an extremely difficult juncture in the quest for peace in the Middle East.

In briefing the Security Council, and in our discussions with the parties, we have said that the path to a just and comprehensive peace settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) would not be easy. We have stressed that peace is a long, hard and demanding process. But we have also said that that should not deter the parties or their partners in the international community. There is no alternative to pursuing this difficult and perilous path.

We are now crossing dire and stormy straits. While the situation is grave, it is alarmist to speak of the demise of the peace process. But if we abandon the course of peace as drawn in the road map, we would accede to those individuals and groups that do not want peace. We would surrender to those who want to reign through force and terror — to rule not by the rule of law but by that of man. If so, we would abandon the people of the region to further generations of violence, death and misery. At this difficult time, we have no choice but to increase our efforts to implement the road map and to strive for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The President: I thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for that very comprehensive briefing.

The next speaker on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month and to welcome you to the United Nations. I should also like to thank the sisterly delegation of Syria for its excellent stewardship of the Council the past month and to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Fayssal Mekdad on assuming his new duties as Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Last Thursday, the threats of Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian leadership reached a new level with the decision by the so-called Israeli security cabinet to "remove Yasser Arafat" and to request the Israeli army to draw up a plan for the expulsion of the elected President of the Palestinian Authority. At this critical juncture, it must be firmly and unequivocally stated that the land of Palestine and its people are not the property of the occupying Power and that to carry out such an action or even to constantly reiterate such a threat would be considered an assault on the Palestinian national dignity; it would mean the end of the Palestinian Authority and would signal the actual demise of any peace process between the two sides. In addition, it should be recalled that international law — specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 — is clear in its prohibition of such a war crime.

We believe that the international community must take decisive and swift action in order to prevent the occupying Power from carrying out such an illegal, insane act. For that reason, we specifically called on the Security Council — as did the Arab Group through its Chairman, the Permanent Representative of Sudan — to take the immediate necessary measures in that regard. We appreciate the fact that members of the Council addressed the matter last Friday, and we urge the Council to take action on the draft resolution before it today. The negative Israeli reaction to the press statement read by the President of the Council on behalf of members — as well as to positions taken by the whole international community — reaffirms the need for stronger steps to be taken by the Council in response to this existing danger. Only yesterday, the Vice Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Ehud Olmert, made an announcement to the effect that killing Yasser Arafat was definitely an available option.

Indeed, Mr. Sharon and his Government represent a threat to the stability of the region. They reject real peace, and they insist on the use of force and on a military solution. Mr. Sharon has publicly said — for those who want to hear — that he does not want a lasting and permanent settlement and rather seeks only long-term transitional arrangements. Clearly, Mr. Sharon's vision is the imposition of a number of walled and separate bantustans, confining the Palestinian people to less than half of the West Bank and to slightly more than half of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians could find a way to connect those bantustans and to call it a Palestinian State if they wish, while Israel keeps the rest of the Palestinian land and continues its colonization and gradual annexation. To all that, we can add the refusal by Israel to divide Jerusalem between the two sides and the rejection of any rights for Palestine refugees.

Those are the facts, and everything that Mr. Sharon has said or done has been in line with, and at the service of, such a vision. That is why the expansionist wall is being built: to wall in the aforementioned bantustans and to eliminate any potential for a real settlement. That is also why settlement activities — including the illegal transfer of Israeli settlers to our land — are continuing. And that is why Israel proceeds with its military escalation and destruction, and why it has worked so vigorously to reverse the situation to the pre-Oslo conditions 10 years after its beginning.

But achieving such a dreadful and racist vision requires two main things. The first is the breaking down of the Palestinian national movement and the destruction of its leadership, since it would never accept such schemes. That is why we see such a vicious campaign against Yasser Arafat, the national leader of our people, and the attempts to get rid of him. That is also why Israel did not give anything to the former Prime Minister, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, since it was understood that he, too, would never accept the schemes of Mr. Sharon and his Government, and that is also why Israel has not welcomed the Prime Minister-designate, Mr. Ahmed Qurei — all proving that what Israel truly wants is the destruction of the Palestinian national leadership.

The second thing is the undermining of international legitimacy, the ignoring of relevant United Nations resolutions and even the termination of the legacy of negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian sides aimed at achieving a reasonable settlement based on the international conscience — all coupled with intensive efforts to destroy any real international initiatives to salvage the situation. That is why the Mitchell recommendations were destroyed and buried, and that is why the road map was emptied of its contents on the way to its burial.

What really happened to the road map? The Israeli Government tried to stall its presentation, and it succeeded in that attempt for a while. Then, when the road map was presented, the Israeli Government never accepted it. The Israeli Government accepted the "steps" in the road map and attached 14 reservations or "concerns", effectively undermining most of it. In spite of that, the United States of America promised to take these "concerns" into consideration during its implementation. On the other hand, the Palestinian side accepted the road map without reservations.

The time then came for both sides to take the first essential step set out in the road map. The Palestinian leadership was to issue an unequivocal statement "reiterating Israel's right to exist in peace and security and calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to end armed activity and all acts of violence against Israelis anywhere". The Israeli leadership was to issue an unequivocal statement "affirming its commitment to the two-State vision of an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian State living in peace and security alongside Israel, as expressed by President Bush, and calling for an immediate end to violence against Palestinians everywhere".

During the summit at Aqaba, the Palestinian leadership, represented by then Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, did implement the first stated step. He even went a step further than the text of the road map required. However, the Israeli leadership, represented by Mr. Sharon, rejected the first stated step. Mr. Sharon mumbled something about a Palestinian State, but he did not declare his acceptance of an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State. That was perfectly in line with his vision, but not with the vision outlined in the road map. He further refused to declare an immediate end to violence against Palestinians everywhere.

What, then, is left for the Palestinian side from the road map? A Palestinian State in the form that Mr. Sharon desires, an Israeli rejection of the ceasefire and a return to the Israeli logic that it is the Palestinian side only that has to take the necessary steps. We found ourselves in a situation that had nothing to do with the road map, especially in the light of the attempts to sidetrack the role of the Quartet and to reduce the monitoring mechanism agreed upon in the road map to something that has nothing to do with either the monitoring or the mechanism.

In spite of that, and with a great deal of effort, the Palestinian Government and the Palestinian leadership, with assistance from the Arab Republic of Egypt and other countries, were able to obtain a unilateral declaration by all Palestinian groups to cease all acts of violence. Indeed, there was a very high degree of compliance with such a declaration of ceasefire or truce.

What did the Israeli Government do? It continued with its confiscation of land, its settlement activities and the construction of the expansionist wall. It did not even exert a serious effort to remove the so-called unauthorized outposts. Moreover, Israel also maintained the checkpoints, the siege and all of the policies and measures that are destroying the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, it continued its killings of Palestinians, including extrajudicial execution, as well as its attacks, destruction and arrests. It continued with all of these actions, despite repeated warnings from many parties, until they led to the suicide bombing in West Jerusalem on 19 August. That was followed by the extrajudicial execution by Israel of Mr. Ismail Abu Shanab and the demise of the truce.

Since then, the insane escalation has continued. The occupying forces have committed at least eight extrajudicial executions, which undoubtedly constitute war crimes that should be condemned and stopped. On the other hand, Hamas carried out two suicide bombings, in West Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, which constitute terrorist attacks that should also be condemned and stopped.

What is shocking about all these events is that, in spite of their detailed knowledge of these events and their presumed role as mediator, some have accepted the logic and positions of Mr. Sharon and his Government almost entirely and have been repeating the Israeli arguments and lies. This is not only painful, but highly irresponsible, and if it continues it will lead to horrendous consequences.

All of this must be brought to an end before it is too late. There must be a complete departure from violence and the logic of a military solution. We must return to the negotiating table, and the road map must be revived and implemented in a real and honest way.

In order for this to happen, however, we cannot continue in the old way. It is time to admit that the essential problem is the position of Israel, which is insisting on a policy of settlement building, refusing to end the occupation of Palestinian land and failing to accept an independent sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. Without a change in that position, there will be no peace process and there can be no implementation of the road map or of any other initiative. In turn, such a change, when it takes place, will open the road to the implementation by the Palestinian side of its obligations, including the cessation of all violence and the provision of real security.

It is time to face reality and to stop covering the Israeli positions or running away from confronting those positions while hoping that the process will remain alive, even if in appearance only. It is time to stop inventing other reasons for the current crisis, such as the internal Palestinian situation or other issues, however important they may be.

The revival of the road map will require new and serious implementation, beginning with the very first step, coupled with a decision to face up to the realities and prevent both sides from evading their responsibilities. The Security Council could — indeed, should — play an important role in this respect. It must provide strong support for the road map and officially order the two sides to comply with its provisions and to implement them. We must also, through the Quartet and perhaps also with the help of the Security Council, build the agreed-upon monitoring mechanism and have a real international presence — maybe even international troops — as the Secretary-General has proposed in the past and as France is currently proposing. Such bold steps are required if the current tragic situation is to be brought to an end and a return to the path of peace ensured.

I would like once again to reiterate the Security Council's responsibility with regard to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the situation in the Middle East in general. It has been almost nine months since the last time the Security Council dealt with the situation — that is to say, since the United States veto last December. During the intervening period, the conditions have dramatically deteriorated and the situation is much more dangerous than before. We believe that, regardless of what happens to the peace process, the Security Council has responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, for defending the Charter and international law and for defending its own relevant resolutions and not allowing their violation.

I want specifically to refer to the Council's resolutions affirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements and demanding that such activities by the occupying Power cease. Now there is also the expansionist wall, which imposes a new and decisive challenge to the Council. That wall is not being built in accordance with the armistice line of 1949, which is also known as the 1967 border. It is being built on Palestinian land and involves the de facto confiscation of thousands of dunums of Palestinian land and the destruction of the lives of thousands of Palestinians.

The continuation of such a wall will effectively end, once and for all, the vision of two States. The building of the wall must therefore be stopped, and the wall must be brought down. We will call on the Council to take the necessary measures in this regard at a later stage. For the time being, however, we must take the necessary measures to prevent the situation from being further inflamed to ensure that no harm will be inflicted on our President. Once more, this needs to be undertaken in compliance with international law, with respect for the national dignity of our people and their democratic choices and, ultimately, to preserve the option of peace.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Israel, on whom I now call.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on you assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of September. Let me also wish you well in assuming the representation of your great country.

Two days ago, on 13 September, we commemorated the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Principles on the White House lawn. That was a time of hope for the people of the region and of the world that the leadership on both sides was committed to a peaceful and negotiated resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At that time, and despite well-founded reservations, Israel was willing to believe that Yasser Arafat had abandoned the path of terrorism and embarked on the road to true reconciliation and mutual recognition. It was on the basis of that commitment that Mr. Arafat entered Palestinian Authority territory to implement his obligations under signed agreements.

Unfortunately, as we have all known for some time, Mr. Arafat lied. Israel, like other members of the international community, has come to that conclusion reluctantly and painfully. More than any other State, we invested a great deal in Mr. Arafat's word and were willing, against our better judgement, to heed calls from other States to forgo or forgive Mr. Arafat's failures, even at the earliest stages of the peace process.

As much as we had all hoped for the opposite result, it is abundantly clear that the person with the standing to deliver a fair and genuine peace on the Palestinian side has done the most to bury its chances. We cannot ignore the facts. His continuing rejection of Israel's right to exist, his denial of the ancient ties of the Jewish people to its homeland and his support of terrorists and their tactics have brought untold suffering to the region and denied the promise of peace and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians alike. He has sought to turn a political and resolvable conflict into a seemingly intractable religious and cross-cultural struggle. Among the litany of deliberately missed opportunities, the Palestinian leadership, under Mr. Arafat's control, rejected at Camp David the opportunity for the establishment of a Palestinian State side by side with Israel, in favour of the path of terrorism that he, as one of its masterminds, has never really abandoned.

Since September 2000, 869 Israeli citizens have been killed, and nearly 6,000 have been wounded, in homicide bombings and terrorist attacks that deliberately targeted the innocent. There is hardly a single Israeli citizen today who has not been affected, directly or indirectly, by Palestinian terrorism. The equivalent number of casualties in a country with a population of that of the United Kingdom would be 84,609 citizens. That figure may give us all some pause in comprehending the devastating impact that the Palestinian leadership's refusal to confront the terrorists in its midst has had on the people of the region.

Tragically, Mr. Arafat's rule has brought considerable pain and havoc to Palestinian society as well. The brazen refusal of the Palestinian leadership to fulfil its obligations to dismantle terrorist organizations, and join the global campaign against terrorism has exacted a heavy toll on Palestinian society. By allowing terrorists to set-up shop in the heart of Palestinian civilian areas, in grave violation of international humanitarian law, Mr. Arafat has seriously endangered the lives of innocent Palestinian civilians. By stifling dissent, preventing the emergence of democratic institutions and violating the human rights of Palestinians, including the Palestinian Christian community, he has set back the development of a vibrant and responsible Palestinian society. By allowing only one voice while nurturing a myriad of competing security and terrorist organizations, he has succeeded in perpetuating his own corrupt rule at the expense of the welfare of Palestinian civilians.

Events of recent days have proven again that Mr. Arafat is determined to prevent any process of genuine reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. I dare say, there is hardly a diplomat in this room who would not admit privately that Mr. Arafat represents a significant obstacle to the peace process. He has shunned every outstretched hand, while placating the international community with pathetic rhetoric that has been belied almost daily by his actions. The result has been paid in the blood of Israelis and Palestinians.

He is amongst a select group of terrorist entrepreneurs who have brought airplane hijackings, massacres of Olympic athletes, the killing of children sleeping in the shelter of their own beds, and suicide terrorism, to a region that yearns for peace and stability. And he is at the helm of those who have been supporting mega-terror attacks, in the style of the bombing of the Twin Towers, to bring the region to the brink of catastrophe. Today such immoral tactics, stamped with Mr. Arafat's label of origin, are callously and indiscriminately exported beyond our region. Global, indiscriminate terrorism is made by Arafat, and was invented by Arafat.

Knowing all this, for how long will there be states among us who are willing to continue the charade of touting Mr. Arafat as a legitimate leader committed to the welfare of his people and peaceful relations with his neighbours. The ruin that Mr. Arafat has left behind in Jordan, Lebanon, and the West Bank testify to the fact that he has brought nothing but despair and devastation to his own peoples and to other peoples in the region. He is his own people's devil of death and their greatest tragedy.

One need not rely on Israeli declarations to come to this conclusion. Courageous members of Palestinian society and responsible Palestinian and world leaders have themselves admitted that Mr. Arafat's cruel, authoritarian and corrupt rule is designed to perpetuate his own power — not to benefit his people.

Since efforts have been underway to restart the peace process through the road map, Mr. Arafat has played a wholly destructive role at every step of the way. He has actively sought to prevent the Palestinian Prime Minister from fulfilling the Palestinian obligations under the road map. He has sabotaged attempts to establish and new and different leadership in the Palestinian Authority, which stood at the basis of President Bush's vision.

He has refused to allow the consolidation of security forces under the control of an empowered minister for internal security, so that finally, responsible Palestinians can act to completely dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, as they are morally and legally obligated to do. After voicing his active objection to the appointment of Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Mr. Arafat pressured members of the Palestinian legislative council to narrow Mr. Abbas' control. He has acted to undermine Mr. Abbas from the beginning of his tenure to the very end, until Mr. Abbas was compelled to resign and admit publicly that Mr. Arafat had not given him the authority to fulfil the obligations that the Palestinians had taken upon themselves.

He has continued to encourage acts of terrorism and violence, and kept renegade terrorist groups like the Tanzim under his direct control, so that at any given moment he could scuttle efforts to renew dialogue by directing the murder of innocent civilians.

He has worked to prevent efforts made to introduce transparency and accountability in Palestinian Authority's finances, so that money can continue to be funnelled into his private accounts. He has signed peace agreements with one hand, and signed checks to terrorists and suicide bombers with the other.

The decision of the Israeli cabinet last Thursday merely states the obvious, namely, that Mr. Arafat is an obstacle to peace. This realization was a driving force in the call for reform in the context of the road map, and it is even more relevant today as the prospects for restarting the peace process risk being doomed to failure.

In other instances, members of the international community have recognized that certain leaders are so destructive to the rights of their own people and to the security and stability of their region, that their legitimacy must be questioned. Mr. Arafat is no exception.

How many more children have to die? How many more concerted peace efforts need to be scuttled before the world is willing to denounce Mr. Arafat's role in a clear voice?

And yet, when is the Security Council galvanized into action? Was it galvanized to act after the horrific suicide bombings which killed 22 and injured 135 on a crowded bus in downtown Jerusalem, filled with orthodox Jewish families and children and babies returning from prayers at the Western Wall? Was it galvanized to act this past Tuesday when two suicide bombings, at a café in Jerusalem and a bus stop in Central Israel, killed a total of 15 and injured more than 70 Israelis, just hours apart?

The Council may have already heard that these latest attacks were perpetrated by terrorists recently released by Israel as part of a goodwill gesture towards the Palestinian leadership. They are further evidence that every gesture made by Israel and every risk taken for the sake of peace has been answered with criminal action and inaction on the part of the Palestinian leadership under Mr. Arafat's control.

Let us take a moment to consider the price of Israel's goodwill gestures made at the behest of the international community in the hope that Mr. Arafat's leadership would respond in kind. It is the price paid by Dr. David Applebaum and his daughter Nava, who were among those murdered in the terrorist attack in Jerusalem this past Tuesday. Dr. Applebaum, a renowned specialist in emergency medicine and the head of the emergency room at Shaare Zedek Hospital, who himself had treated countless terror victims, had brought his daughter to the Jerusalem café for a heart-to-heart talk on the very eve of her wedding. It is the price paid in lives because ambulances carrying the injured from a terrorist attack must slow down so that they can be checked as a result of intelligence reports indicating that terrorists are attempting to booby-trap ambulances to explode upon arrival at hospitals. It is the price paid in fear by courageous Israeli civilians who do not know when or where the next attack, resulting from Mr. Arafat's encouragement or acquiescence, will come.

It would be a grave error if the Council were to come to the aid not of the victims of terrorism, but of their sponsor and perpetrator. The Council's focus should be directed first and foremost at terrorism and at its facilitators, and not at the response to terrorism. Pressure should be directed against the problem and not against those who are its victims.

The efforts of the Palestinian representative in this Chamber advance not the interests of the Palestinian people, but the personal interest and corrupt rule of Mr. Arafat himself. High-minded rhetoric about the so-called legitimacy of Mr. Arafat's leadership and the illegitimacy of Israel's interference are meaningless and hypocritical in the face of the hundreds of dead and injured innocent civilians killed with the direct approval or acquiescence of Mr. Arafat himself. What country, faced with terrorism of this unprecedented magnitude and duration, would not hold directly and criminally responsible the person who has both orchestrated the terror and refused to suppress it?

In perpetuating this game of legitimizing Mr. Arafat, we fundamentally undermine our efforts to allow an empowered Palestinian Prime Minister to work to implement the road map and reach a peaceful solution. Such a policy serves the interests of no one other than the terrorists whom Mr. Arafat continues to support. It is time we expressly admitted that he is part of the problem and not part of the solution.

Israel holds out hope that a new and different Palestinian leadership that categorically abandons the ways of Mr. Arafat will be ready to fully and responsibly implement its obligations to fight terrorism and incitement. If it does so, it will find in Israel a willing partner ready to make painful compromises, as it has proven before, to realize President Bush's vision.

Our discussions today take place on the tails of 11 September, the anniversary of the worst terrorist attack in history, and the signing of the Declaration of Principles in Washington on 13 September 1993. These two events are a haunting and vivid illustration of the devastating effects of terrorism and of the promise and possibility of peace if terrorism is abandoned and the vision of peace between Israelis and Palestinians is vigorously pursued.

Time and again, the world has held out hope that Mr. Arafat has rejected the path of terrorism for the path of peace; the hope that he has become a responsible statesman and not remained a professional terrorist. In the two years following 11 September, Mr. Arafat has continued to demonstrate that he is on the wrong side of history and that he refuses to learn any lessons about the effects of terrorism for both Israelis and Palestinians. Rather than taking responsibility to build a genuine, democratic Palestinian society that can live in peace with its neighbours, he has turned Palestinian victimhood into a professional enterprise and Palestinian suffering into a source of power and personal prosperity. We will bring no benefit today to the cause of peace, or to the legitimate rights of Palestinians and Israelis, if we come to the defence of someone who has brought only suffering and the promise of further bloodshed.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (spoke in French): My delegation followed with great interest Mr. Roed-Larsen's briefing on the latest developments in Palestine. I wish to thank him for his uncompromising analysis of the situation.

The situation in the Middle East, especially in Palestine, is disturbing. The great hopes inspired by the road map seem to be fading. Indeed, since the attack in Jerusalem of 19 August and the many reprisals that followed, violence has gained the upper hand. The unilateral, conditional and temporary truce has been broken. The closure of territories has resumed, constant incursions have begun anew, raids are intensifying and other coercive measures have been announced.

It goes without saying that the return of violence compromises the implementation of the road map, which is the only option for the parties if they want peace. Today, we should direct our efforts towards the second phase of the road map. Let us recall that the second phase was to provide, on the basis of an assessment of the results of the first, the convening of an international conference and the establishment of a viable independent Palestinian State. Unfortunately, that has not occurred. More disturbing yet, the achievements of the first phase are now being challenged. The resurgence of violence and the myriad threats against the head of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Arafat, do not augur well for the future.

In this regard, Cameroon joins the international community in stating that these solutions are roads that lead nowhere. They may enduringly undermine the prospects for peace contained in the road map.

We share the hope expressed earlier by Mr. Roed-Larsen about what he called the Quartet mechanism. We also reiterate our support to the members of the Quartet in particular and to all international or regional mediators in their efforts to bring the conflicting parties back to the path of peace.

We welcome the efforts made by the European Union through the contacts of Mr. Javier Solana, High Representative for External Policy. We are convinced that other major international actors beyond the Quartet can use their influence to act upon the parties. Finally, we once again express an appeal to the parties themselves to make greater use of peaceful means. In that regard, it is important that the Security Council send them a strong signal, without delay, urging them to resume immediately a constructive dialogue with a view to a definitive settlement of this long-lasting conflict.

We wish to reiterate our commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), and 1397 (2002).

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish at the outset to welcome Mr. Roed-Larsen, the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, to today's open meeting. I also wish to thank him for his briefing on the latest developments in the Middle East.

Since the last open briefing of the Security Council, the Palestinian-Israeli situation has taken a sharp turn for the worse. Both sides are again bogged down in a vicious cycle of countering violence with violence. That state of affairs has become a source of great concern for the international community. A series of suicide bombings has occurred in Israel. At the same time, the Israeli army continues to carry out targeted killings, resulting in many casualties and deaths of innocent civilians and undermining the Middle East peace process. Equally disturbing is the fact that Israel made a decision in principle on 11 September to expel President Arafat of the Palestinian Authority, thus exacerbating further the already tense situation.

China attaches great importance to maintaining peace and security in the Middle East region. We are deeply worried about the current situation in Israel and Palestine. We condemn the suicide bombings that have resulted in casualties and the death of innocent civilians. We also condemn the targeted operations of the Israeli Government and oppose its decision in principle to expel President Arafat. President Arafat is the duly elected, legitimate leader of the Palestinian people. The Israeli Cabinet's decision is of no help to the Middle East peace process. We ask that the Israeli side exercise caution, in order to prevent further deterioration of the situation.

The history of the question of Palestine and Israel fully demonstrates that force cannot bring real peace and security and that dialogue is the only way to resolve the issue. In the current situation, there is an even greater need for the Palestinian and Israeli leaders to demonstrate political courage and, in the long-term interests of the people of both sides, to return expeditiously to the right track and engage in political negotiations. We strongly urge the Israeli and Palestinian sides to renounce violence and the policy of targeted killings and, at the same time, to take effective measures to implement in earnest the obligations set forth in the roadmap. That is the only way the Middle East peace process will move forward.

Under the current circumstances, it is equally important that the international community make even greater efforts to create conditions conducive to the successful implementation of the road map. We sincerely hope that, with the support and assistance of the international community, the Middle East region, pursuant to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and the principle of land for peace, will achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace as soon as possible.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We wish to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this meeting and for your positive response to our request to make it open to all Member States. We wish once again to welcome Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General in the Middle East.

Our meeting today is characterized by the fact that it is being held amid an irresponsible and unprecedented escalation of bloody Israeli acts that the occupied Arab territories have been experiencing and continue to experience as a result of the organized and destructive terrorist military campaign undertaken by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

It is worth mentioning at the outset of our statement that Israel continues to commit these crimes against humanity without guilt or impediments, within the framework of a strict plan being implemented by the Israeli Government to completely end all efforts by the international community to revert to the path of peace and to implement resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly those regarding the conflict in the Middle East.

We have repeatedly reiterated in this international arena and before the international community the conviction of Syria, which has devotedly and sincerely worked for the implementation of a just and comprehensive peace in the region, that the current Israeli Government does not believe in peace and utilizes every possible opportunity to destroy the sanctity of peace and to undermine its bases. It deliberately disregards all means, references and initiatives that could lead to peace. This Israeli Government is in fact a government of war and destruction that disregards international law and the will of the international community.

With the persistence of Israeli war crimes and the escalation of persecution of the Palestinians, the killing of their children and the destruction of their property, the Israeli authorities continue to declare — and to repeat — their intention to proceed with the extrajudicial killings by which they wage war. The Israeli occupation forces are carrying out destructive, brutal and illegitimate acts that are witnessed by world media. The greatest crime that Israel continues to commit is represented by the expansion of the settlements and the construction of the racist wall of separation that once it is completed, will devour half the Palestinian territories in the West Bank. Israel has not ceased to destroy property, confiscate lands, detain thousands of Palestinian youths, close roads, build bypass roads to service the Israeli settlements, restrict movement and all the other measures that allow extremist Jews to enter al-Haram al-Sharif in East Jerusalem. That will lead only to further escalation of tension and exacerbation of this explosive situation.

It is ironic that Israel uses confronting terrorism as a justification to violate international law at a time when Israel itself exercises terror in all its forms and falsely accuses others of committing it.

The unarmed Palestinian people, for whom Israel has left no hope for the establishment of their own State and respect for their dignity, have every right to defend themselves with the limited means available to them. What Israel calls self-defence in order to justify its acts of terror is in fact defence of occupation, the usurpation of rights, expansion at the expense of Palestinians and other Arabs and full denial of the international will that recognizes the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

In addition to all the violations it has committed, Israel has added another threat: its intention to expel the Palestinian President or even assassinate him. That is true arrogance. It reveals the real Israeli objective: to expel the Palestinian people from their land and homes, in contempt of international law, which prohibits Israel as the occupying Power from carrying out such acts of expulsion. If Israel carries out that threat, it would fully expose its devious intentions to all Palestinians and would end all efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace.

We must remember the almost daily violations by Israel along the Blue Line in southern Lebanon, on land, at sea and in the air, in continued defiance of Lebanon's sovereignty over its land, waters and airspace. Israel does not stop at those provocations but continues to threaten Lebanon and deny that country's right to self-defence.

In the face of all those actions by Israel, Syria, whose Golan has been under Israeli occupation since 1967, stands by the Palestinian people to achieve their rights. It stands, as it always has, on the side of achieving a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East. We have made that a strategic objective, as all the Arab States declared at the 2002 Beirut Summit.

In that regard, President Bashar Al-Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic has stressed the need for a credible unified international vision as the basis for a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East, to be achieved through dialogue and discussions with the States of the region and through the positive involvement of the United Nations in its role of maintaining international peace and security. President Al-Assad has also reaffirmed that Syria will always stand on the side of a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy, which recognizes the return of all occupied Arab territories to their legitimate owners.

Finally, Syria reaffirms that it is incumbent upon the international community — including the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security — to take a firm stand in the face of these illegitimate policies and actions in order to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to refrain from its continued violations of international law and to commit itself to implementing the will of international legitimacy and the provisions of international law and justice. Only then will the deteriorating situation in the Middle East be reversed and will there be a return to the road to a just and comprehensive peace based on Israel's implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of "land for peace", the Madrid peace conference and the declaration adopted at the Arab summit in Beirut.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (spoke in French): I would like to thank Terje Roed-Larsen for his very thorough analysis and very useful suggestions.

As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria fully supports the statement that will be made shortly by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

Bulgaria deeply regrets the resumption of violence in the Middle East. The ceasefire has ended and violence has begun again. We unreservedly condemn the continuing practice of suicide bombings perpetrated by extremist Palestinian organizations. We call on the Palestinian Authority to take firmer and more concrete measures to disarm those terrorist organizations and to dismantle their structures. Equally, we call on Israel to end the practice of extrajudicial executions.

Bulgaria believes that a possible expulsion of Yasser Arafat from Palestinian territories would cause a political crisis of incalculable consequences and an increase in violence. We regret the resignation of Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas. It was a hard blow to the peace process. We welcome the appointment of the President of the Legislative Council, Mr. Ahmed Qurei, to the post of Prime Minister. We wish him good luck. We hope that the new Prime Minister will enjoy the confidence and support of the Palestinian people, the members of the Quartet and the entire international community. To that end, he must possess the sufficient authority for undertaking the necessary measures against terrorist organizations.

Bulgaria is convinced that the road map is not dead. The two parties must do everything possible to overcome their differences, resume their contacts and continue their joint efforts relative to the commitments they made for the road map's implementation. That implementation should over time bring an end to the spiral of violence and terror, including by ending all forms of collective punishment and, of course, by improving the daily living conditions of the Palestinian people. The Quartet and the parties involved in the peace process must redouble their efforts to press the two parties to live up to the promises they have made.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): First, I would like to thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for his lucid and comprehensive briefing.

It was not very long ago that the international community assisted the parties to the conflict in Palestine to adopt the Quartet's road map, which contained a clear objective: an end to occupation; a permanent settlement of the conflict on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002); and, ultimately, the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State living in peace with its neighbours. The achievement of that objective is now threatened by a new, indefensible cycle of violence emerging against the backdrop of the continued violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people by the occupation forces.

Pakistan is deeply concerned at the situation in Palestine, particularly after the Israeli decision to remove from Palestine Chairman Arafat, the legitimately elected President of the Palestinian party. Concerns on that score have further heightened since the latest statement by a member of the Israeli Cabinet. We believe that any action to remove President Arafat will only complicate the peace efforts in the region, further contribute to mistrust between the parties and seriously undermine the implementation of the road map. It will spur, not stem, the rising tide of violence in which innocent civilians invariably suffer the most.

One must not forget that the current situation in Palestine is a sad corollary of incessant disrespect for international humanitarian and human rights law, which has engendered frustration and anger and has resulted in the unfortunate killing of innocent people on both sides. Pakistan regrets those killings and condoles with the families of the victims.

While the occupation of the Palestinian territories is itself illegal, warranting immediate corrective measures, persistent violations of fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people — including closures, blockades, curfews, targeted assassinations and the construction of illegal settlements and of a separation wall — have added to the misery of that besieged people. Several delegations noted earlier that those activities are intended to create new realities on the ground before the start of negotiations on a final settlement. Security Council officials earlier urged a permanent end to all those measures, yet such violations continue unabated.

Those and other actions have dissipated confidence among Palestinians and have contributed to scepticism about the international community's ability to be resolute in achieving the objectives of the road map. We must neutralize these obstacles by showing a stronger international commitment to a negotiated settlement of the conflict. We must help bring an end to Palestinian dispossession and must facilitate the realization of their right of self-determination.

Israel must realize that peace cannot be durable if it is imposed through the use of force. Nor can lasting peace be achieved by liquidating duly elected leaders and interlocutors. Peace cannot come with one side literally dictating its terms. Removing President Arafat will not bring peace or security for anyone. Israel must cease all hostile actions against the Palestinian people and their lawful Government.

The present deteriorating situation in Palestine warrants urgent attention by the international community. We must act, and act with determination, to prevent the situation from descending further into chaos — a chaos in which neither side can realize its hopes for peace with security. Violence and provocations beget violence and reprisals. We must act now to break the cycle, to stop further provocations and to bring the parties back to the track of negotiations to facilitate the implementation of the road map. We fully agree with Mr. Roed-Larsen that there is no alternative for the parties but to recommit themselves to the road map. We look forward to the Council's action, as well as to the Quartet's next meeting, to salvage the present situation and to move back to the larger and nobler goal of a just and lasting solution in line with the two-State vision.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the holding of this open meeting and especially for the very frank analysis given to us by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the region.

It is obviously no coincidence that this new wave of acts of terrorism, provocations and reprisals characterizing this bloody vicious circle is occurring just when the peace initiative proposed by the Quartet and expressed in the road map had taken shape in the political and diplomatic field. There is very clearly a very wide gap between the purposes verbally expressed by the Israeli and Palestinian parties to reach a negotiated agreement, on the one hand, and their weak political will on the other. To the fragile political will of the Government of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority, we must add the openly anti-peace postures that extremist factions on both sides of the conflict are taking daily. What has happened in recent weeks is the true expression of the lack of a genuine and courageous commitment by the parties to a peaceful way out. As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Roed-Larsen, said, neither of the parties has made a serious and genuine effort to attend to the demands of the other. For that reason, the road map has not taken off, and now we run the risk that this effort will founder. The tunnel through which we had been moving towards the light of peace has once again collapsed.

We deeply regret that the Palestinian Authority has not yet had the strength, the cohesion or ultimately the determination to halt the terrorist attacks and suicide bombings that have caused so much pain, horror and bloodshed to the Israeli population, primarily the innocent civilian population. Indeed, the great majority of victims of those attacks are innocent Israelis — children, young people, women and the elderly — many of them genuinely convinced that Israel and Palestine should and can live in peace and prosper together. Each terrorist attack is an act of self-immolation of the Palestinian cause itself. Each drop of blood shed on Israel's streets deepens the abyss and distances the Palestinians from their just dream and their legitimate vision: the creation of an independent State. The Palestinian Authority and President Arafat must understand once and for all that everything they do to halt and prevent terrorism, everything they do to overcome hatred and to inculcate among children and youths, not a thirst for vengeance but a generous spirit of reconciliation, will benefit their cause. The sooner an end is put to terrorism, the closer the foundations of a Palestinian State will be — not the reverse.

Israel gains nothing by going down the path of disproportionate reprisals, with grave loss of human life. It gains nothing by making life impossible for the Palestinians in their own territory. It gains nothing by creating extreme humanitarian conditions for Palestinian youths and children. It gains nothing by carrying out extrajudicial executions. It gains nothing by building walls. Those measures are very far from achieving their security objectives; they will not make Israel more secure. For the Israelis, there can be no consolation in the fact that, through blood and fire, they are preventing the carrying out of certain suicidal terrorist acts, when other acts will follow them. Experience undoubtedly shows that walls are only open wounds and that fire is not put out with fire.

Mexico, as a friend of Israel and of its people, expresses the hope that extrajudicial executions will be halted, that the Government of Israel will put an end to reprisals against the civilian population, that the building of the wall will be suspended and that the settlements will be halted.

My Government also expresses the particular hope that measures to expel or confine President Yasser Arafat will not be taken. He is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, having been elected by them, and must be respected as such. Israel will gain nothing by violating the self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Mexico has endorsed all the various attempts to resolve this issue that the Council has supported since the Madrid Conference, the Oslo Agreements and the various commendable mediation efforts led by the United States. The path of mediation has led to the road map proposed by the Quartet. This is not just one more initiative; in many ways it is the final opportunity for Israel and Palestine to truly cross the threshold to a peace in which both sides can live together as independent nations with secure borders. The road map has its failings — it does not establish a clear sequence for mutual concessions and it does not set out a clear system of penalties for the parties. Nor does not it establish a clear system for implementation. Those failings can — and should — be corrected. The Quartet's road map should not, however, be aborted; it remains the only way forward towards a viable and legitimate solution of the conflict.

Together with the efforts of the Quartet, the Council should consider the adoption of other measures to strengthen confidence and improve the prospects for peace so as to put an end to violence and deal with the deeply distressing humanitarian situation faced by the Palestinian people. The Security Council has an obligation to take action. Israelis and Palestinians should be prepared for the Security Council to become a part of the solution to this conflict.

Only through the prompt establishment of a Palestinian State will peace be possible, and this will not be achieved by expelling Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We, like previous speakers, are grateful to the Special Coordinator and Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, for his comprehensive and objective briefing. We are once again discussing an exacerbation of the situation in the Middle East. Unfortunately, the Palestinian-Israeli confrontation is taking on an increasingly dangerous character. People are dying and serious material damage is being done to the Palestinian territories — indeed, a humanitarian disaster is unfolding there.

Moscow is deeply concerned about the Government of Israel's decision to expel the head of the Palestinian National Authority, Mr. Arafat. To do so would be a serious political mistake with very negative implications for a region where the situation is already very complex. Such a step would erase any prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli crisis and, at worst, could lead to developments spinning out of control.

Russia condemns terrorism in all its forms. It is convinced that political goals cannot be achieved through acts of terrorism. This condemnation also fully applies to terrorist acts carried out in Israel. We express our deep condolences to the families of the deceased and our sincere sympathy to all the victims. The actions of terrorists undermine efforts to establish peace in the region. They create further obstacles in the road towards a political settlement. They not only wreak devastation on completely innocent people, but damage the national interests of the Palestinian people and put roadblocks in the path towards Palestinian statehood.

In order to break this vicious circle of confrontation, it is important for all the parties involved to refrain from steps that harm our chances for renewing the political process.

We call on the leadership of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to act with the utmost responsibility. It is unacceptable for extremists to dictate their will. The leaders of both sides must take all necessary steps to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control once and for all. We can only break the back of this confrontation and put an end to terror and other manifestations of violence through the joint efforts of Israelis and Palestinians, who must comply with their mutually agreed commitments. This will require the parties to return to following the road map, with the active support of the international community, first and foremost the Quartet of international mediators — Russia, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations.

The road map is unique. It may provide the only chance of finding a way out of the crisis and of reaching a settlement that fully meets the interests of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and establishes conditions for them to live in a secure peace. It is our firm view that diplomatic efforts must continue with a view to taking practical steps to find a way out of the tragedy of the situation in the Middle East on the basis of a renewed process towards political settlement.

Both the elimination of terror and a final settlement, including the establishment of a Palestinian State, would meet the fundamental interests of Israelis and Palestinians. This can be achieved only through peaceful means and the active cooperation of international mediators.

We note the important constructive role to be played by the Security Council. Russia, as a co-sponsor of the peace process, will continue to make an active contribution to these efforts.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to say that France associates itself fully with the statement to be made later by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

I should like to thank the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator, Mr. Roed-Larsen, for his briefing. France shares his analysis and agrees with his recommendations. I should also like to thank you, Sir, for having organized this public debate. On Friday the Arab Group asked for the Council to meet and to take immediate action. The extreme gravity of the situation on the ground requires the entire international community to make its voice known and to search for collective solutions. The matter is one of great urgency, given that we are now — in September 2003 — entering the fourth year of the intifada and that 10 years ago the Washington Declaration was signed by Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin.

What is the current situation? What are the remedies? The situation is one of violence on both sides; insecurity is growing and peace seems far away. We are at a critical point. Barbaric terrorist acts perpetrated by armed Palestinian groups hostile to peace continue against Israeli civilians. Israeli civilians are living in daily anxiety and fear for their lives and the lives of their children. Palestinians also live with the same fear and anxiety. Targeted killings organized by the Israeli army continue; just as children are killed, houses are demolished, farmland is destroyed and other acts of collective reprisals continue. The Israeli authorities are building a separation wall that impinges upon Palestinian lands and encircles the population. Some towns, in particular Qalqiliya, have become ghettos. Settlement activity is growing and settlements are growing larger, particularly in Jerusalem, which is a Holy City three times over and which the Council has always said had a special character whose nature should be respected.

Against that backdrop, the Israeli decision in principle to remove Yasser Arafat, who is the legitimately elected President of the Palestinian Authority, is contrary to the basic rules of international law. It is also a grave political mistake. Announcing that decision, and its possible implementation, can only be counterproductive for Israeli security and for the prospects for peace. One does not get to choose the people one deals with in a peace process. By definition, in a conflict one makes peace with one's enemies. It is not by avoiding those Palestinian political realities that we will be able to arrive at an independent, viable and democratic Palestinian State that co-exists with the State of Israel, which has a legitimate right to live in security and within internationally recognized borders.

Stopping terrorism cannot be done solely through the logic of military and police security. Making security a precondition for launching political dialogue is tantamount to allowing the entire peace process to be highjacked by extremists, thereby letting terrorists impose their own timetable and interests, as opposed to those of the Palestinian people. Security and policy must go hand-in-hand in pursuing the peace process.

The response to the problem of the terrorism embraced by some Palestinian groups must be comprehensive. The Palestinian people must be mobilized for peace and must stand behind their Prime Minister and Government. That presupposes that Palestinian energies not be polarized by internal power struggles and that the President, Prime Minister, Government and Parliament act under basic Palestinian law and in a spirit of unity to implement the road map. The new Prime Minister and his Government must be able to take all necessary measures to reform and unite the security apparatus. They must also do their utmost to arrest and bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorist acts and to dismantle the infrastructure supporting them. Palestinian institutional reforms must then be carried out, and free, transparent and democratic elections held as soon as possible.

It is just as crucial that Israel make the necessary gestures so that the Palestinian people can see the tangible and immediate fruits of the peace process and of dialogue, as opposed to frustration, anger and revolt. The Israeli army must withdraw from all autonomous Palestinian areas and close targeted killings, which are contrary to international law and fuel the cycle of violence. Roadblocks, sieges, curfews and other restrictions against the Palestinian people must be lifted. Israel must discontinue all settlement activities and construction of the separation wall.

That comprehensive and non-sequential approach is the logic advocated by the Quartet's road map, which is not being implemented on the ground due to the lack of a genuine implementation mechanism. France has always called for determined action by the Quartet — which is made up by the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and the Russian Federation — in accordance with the role set forth for it in the road map. France has also called for the holding of an international conference to put the peace process back on track, as well as for the establishment of an effective international monitoring mechanism to ensure that the parties respect their commitments. Both of those elements are called for in the road map. We also believe that an international interposition force that ensures the interests of both parties must be contemplated, but they must both accept it.

France is a friend of Israel, the Arab world and Palestinians. The gravity of the situation on the ground requires extra effort and courage on the part of all of us. We all expect a great deal from the United States and the Quartet, who are the parties principally engaged on the ground and whom we support fully. A silent Security Council would be shirking its responsibilities. The Council must speak for what is right and lend its support to peace efforts. France welcomes the initiative of the Arab Group and is prepared to work on that basis to adopt a consensus Security Council resolution that is commensurate with the seriousness of the situation and that makes a contribution to peace.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to express my gratitude for the briefing given to us by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, who has provided us with a detailed and sobering description of the situation in the region.

Following the official presentation by the Quartet of its new peace proposal to resolve a conflict that has confronted Palestinians and Israelis for generations — known as the road map — there arose in both the region and the international community the hope that, through the appointment of the first Palestinian Prime Minister with executive powers such as the ones held by Mr. Abbas had, it might be possible — this time — for the Palestinian National Authority to carry out the commitments it undertook, thereby making it possible to take decisive steps towards peace in the region.

The Government of Chile notes with deep concern that the road map has encountered serious setbacks — for which both parties are responsible — that have led it to the point of stagnation and resolutely placed it on the path of destruction and senseless death. We therefore condemn the demolition of homes, the continuing construction of the wall of separation on Palestinian territory that is dividing entire communities, the disproportionate use of force and targeted assassinations by the Israeli Government. The Government of the Palestinian National Authority has failed to quell domestic conflicts and has been remiss in exerting its authority and dismantling terrorist groups. The conflict has no military solution, and narrow-mindedness and the lack of humanity will not alter the situation.

The international community has also recently become aware of the decision in principle by the Israeli Government to expel President Arafat. For the Government of Chile, that is a very grave announcement that should be categorically rejected. President Arafat is a democratic official who was legitimately elected by the Palestinian people. It is therefore solely up to the Palestinians to pronounce themselves as to their future. We launch an appeal that that decision, which could definitively end the slim hopes that still remain for the implementation of the road map and which could lead to the further expansion of violence in the region and other unforeseeable consequences, not be implemented.

We must also express in the clearest terms our condemnation for the terrorists acts committed by radical groups against Israeli civilians. Stopping and disbanding such terrorist groups would contribute to re-establishing the necessary environment to build confidence between the parties. Any other effort will be doomed to failure.

At the same time, the Israeli Government must end the targeted killing of Palestinians, which has led to the exacerbation of hatred and many innocent civilian victims. It must also stop building the separation wall, lift the measures that have resulted in a deterioration of the living conditions of Palestinians and end its settlement policy.

The international community has observed with interest the formation of the new Palestinian Government and the real powers it will have to fulfil its tasks, especially with regard to security. Likewise, we appeal to the Government of Israel to make every effort to implement the steps necessary to strengthen the work of the new Prime Minister and to assist him in his work. Otherwise, it will be very difficult for a Palestinian Prime Minister to contain extremist elements or gain the enthusiasm of moderates.

In closing, responsibility for reaching a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians falls essentially on the authorities of both peoples. It is up to the international community to help the parties and to support them in their efforts towards a peace process.

However, if the parties directly involved do not demonstrate the genuine political will to recreate a scenario allowing the peace process to be resumed, the international community should make every effort to urge them back onto the road of dialogue. We therefore urge the Quartet to take initiatives leading towards the restoration of the road map.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): First of all, let me thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for his very useful and comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in the Middle East. I would then like to associate myself with the statement to be given later in this debate by the Italian presidency of the European Union.

My Government is deeply concerned with regard to the latest developments in the Middle East conflict. The decision by Israel to expel in principle Mr. Arafat — the democratically elected and legitimate Chairman of the Palestinian National Authority — is helpful neither in stabilizing the already volatile situation nor in strengthening the security of Israel. On the contrary, the decision adds tension to the situation and makes a solution to the ongoing conflict more difficult. Both sides need to show restraint – we have insisted on that time and again. Also, the remarks made by the Israeli Vice Prime Minister this weekend on different options contemplated in dealing with Chairman Arafat are not helpful. We therefore welcome the clarification by Foreign Minister Shalom that these remarks do not reflect the official position of the Israeli Government. Furthermore, we feel that the Israeli Government should revoke last week's decision.

Likewise, Hamas suicide bombings and Israeli counterattacks have led to a spiral of violence and counter-violence over the last weeks that is claiming an intolerable loss of innocent civilian lives. The deterioration of the situation on the ground has also put in jeopardy the efforts of the international community to restore peace in the region.

The peace process is currently in a critical phase, which could easily turn out to be a turning point for the worse. It is therefore absolutely vital that all parties engaged in the road map and in the peace process – Israel and the Palestinians, as well as the Quartet - do their utmost to get the road map back on track, especially as there is no alternative to the road map.

We now call on Palestinians and Israelis to commit themselves to the road map in both word and deed. In this regard, we expect from the Palestinian Authority that a new, empowered Government will be quickly formed; that the reorganization of security forces foreseen in the road map will finally be realized; and that visible efforts will be undertaken to dismantle all terrorist organizations.

We remind the Israeli Government that it is solely responsible for its actions. There can be no military, but only a political solution to this conflict. We believe that, without a strategy that includes a political perspective, Israel will not be able to achieve lasting security. In our view, the following steps should be taken by the Israeli Government: first, it should revoke its decision to expel in principle the Chairman of the Palestinian National Authority; secondly, it should withdraw the army from the autonomous areas; thirdly, an end must be put to targeted killings; and fourthly, it should freeze all settlement activities and the building of the security wall.

We again call on both parties to exercise utmost restraint in this crucial time for the Middle East peace process. We urge Prime Minister Sharon and designated Prime Minister Qurei to work together in a constructive spirit to speedily overcome the crisis and resume the political dialogue.

We welcome the meeting of the Quartet to be held later this month here in New York, as announced by Mr. Roed-Larsen. We expect bold steps conducive to jump-starting the road map process and to opening an effective way to a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): My delegation thanks Mr. Roed-Larsen for his comprehensive and very thorough briefing. Unfortunately, the tone of today's briefing was quite different from others in the past, reflecting a deteriorating situation as compared to that of July and August, in which he described the situation as fragile but nonetheless offering a revival of the peace process based on the Quartet's road map, which opened a window of opportunity to peace after more than 1,000 days of bloodshed.

Some important developments substantiated the conscious optimism then expressed by Mr. Roed-Larsen. First, the talks held at the end of July between President Bush and the Palestinian and Israeli Prime Ministers on the road map's implementation were seen as reflecting the United States Government's commitment to the process. Secondly, the support expressed by the Quartet members for the policy of the Palestinian Government, headed by then Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, and the recognition of the existence of external conditions for achieving a breakthrough towards the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict were assurances of the international community's commitment to the process. Thirdly, the declaration of the Israeli Prime Minister that Israel was ready to make the necessary concessions in order to advance the peace process were fundamental reassurances that things could move forward in the right direction. Fourthly, the far-reaching reforms initiated by the Palestinian Authority, as demanded by the international community and by the Israeli authorities — especially the ceasefire that the Palestinian Prime Minister was able to put into effect as a prerequisite to start implementing the tasks of the road map — were very important elements that gave additional confidence to the process and its launching.

Finally, the meetings that were taking place regularly between Israelis and Palestinians and the discussions they were holding on outstanding issues brought renewed hope for the creation of a climate conducive to the building of confidence between the parties for the improvement of relations between Israelis and Palestinians and to a meaningful peace process.

Angola regrets the fact that we are back in the cycle of violence. What went wrong? Why, once again, did things fail and the cycle of violence and revenge take hold? How can the serious doubts about the possibility of reviving the peace process be overcome? How can bloodshed be ended so as to realize the vision of the two peoples living in peace and security side by side? Those are a few questions that the Palestinians, the Israelis and the international community must answer in order to devise new ways to put things back on the right track and to renew efforts conducive to solutions to the immense crisis that the region is again facing.

At the present juncture, the Palestinians and the Israelis are faced with dramatic choices and no choice at all with respect to the road of peace. It seems to us that, from the Israeli side, the choices are made and, if implemented, could lead to even greater damage to the whole peace process and to the road map. The avowed intention of the Israeli authorities to kill or ban the Palestinian President is inserted in the same logic as the construction of the separation wall — to cause immediate harm to Israeli-Palestinian relations.

In the view of the Angolan delegation, the will of Palestinians and Israelis to strive for peace and conviviality between the two peoples will need, more than ever, the assistance of the international community in order to overcome the very difficult times ahead. Such assistance must also focus on helping the Palestinian Government to curb destructive actions by armed groups. The international community must mobilize all its efforts to ensure that the Israeli plans concerning President Yasir Arafat do not go ahead. The Security Council must take a clear stand on this issue. The United States and other members of the Quartet must make Israel understand that its intentions are an extremely dangerous step of incalculable consequences.

Finally, it is our view that the Quartet should deploy bold efforts in order to try to revive the peace process. We look forward to the meeting to be held in New York at the end of this month, as indicated by Mr. Larsen.

We agree also with Mr. Larsen when he says that the parties have no other alternative than to recommit — and I would say convincingly — to the road map. The international community cannot stand idle before the great tragedy that is unfolding dangerously in the Middle East.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I align myself with the statement that will be made by the representative of Italy.

The report of Mr. Larsen on the developments in Israel and the Palestinian territories has been particularly clear and accurate. It bears out the critical situation of which we are all aware.

I will not dwell on the tragic accumulation of acts of terrorism and violence, with their endless cortege of innocent victims, which, of course, we condemn vigorously. No one can convince us, for example, that the placement of a bomb on a school bus can have the slightest justification, political or otherwise. It is an outrageous and condemnable act.

In these delicate times, I wish to address one point that has already been mentioned. The decision of the Government of Israel on the possible deportation of the President of the Palestine National Authority, Mr. Arafat, contributes absolutely nothing to the cause of peace. To the contrary, it opens the door wide to increased tensions in a fragile and highly dangerous scenario. Apart from the non-existence of a legal basis, the decision constitutes a mistake of seemingly incalculable, but in fact foreseeable and terrible, consequences. Its revocation would be a step in the right political direction.

We have been stressing the fragility of the mechanism contained in the road map and the need for it to be applied with an interpretation and in a context that will make it possible for it to succeed. That is not happening. The road map is being used to get bogged down in the search for tiny steps forward that are constantly being refuted by the facts.

I believe that, at this juncture, the Council and the Secretary-General should insist on two central points, without which the road map is doomed to failure.

The first point is to stress the need for and the reality of a presence and an international commitment to the resolution of the conflict. The international community has always been present in this conflict, *inter alia*, by financing through a variety of channels the very survival of its actors. The road map has been sensitive to that need and contemplates the holding of an international conference on peace in the Middle East. But we cannot wait for the conditions to come about for such a conference. Our Organization must demand that the key international actors represented by the Quartet act in a much more committed fashion and confront both parties with their responsibilities. Among other things — and not least important — external observation, in depth and on the ground, continues to be absolutely necessary.

Secondly, we wish to reiterate that the driving engine of the road map can only be a political perspective that is deserving of the support of both societies in the conflict. That political perspective is defined ambiguously in the road map. This does not lead us anywhere. There needs to be a design, as detailed as possible, of the point that we wish to reach, a design that can be proposed to both societies with expectations of gaining majority support and a design that responds truly to the two most pressing requirements: Israel's security and the viability of the future Palestinian State.

In the pursuit of those two goals, the role of the United States and other members of the Quartet, particularly the European Union, will be essential.

I would venture to say, and I conclude on this note, that the horizon of peace necessarily implies an in-depth commitment by the United States and the European Union. The Secretary-General of our Organization should revitalize the very essence of the operations of the Quartet with those prospects in mind.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to express my delegation's gratitude to Mr. Roed-Larsen for his edifying and very moving briefing on the tragedy and the very disturbing developments currently taking place in the Middle East, and most particularly in occupied Palestine.

During our recent consultations, in light of the situation prevailing on the ground, my delegation has already expressed its deep concern about the future of the political process in the region, given the challenges to the parties and the international community by the resumption of the cycle of violence, suicide bombings and reprisals in both Palestine and Israel.

In this context, the decision in principle on 11 September by the Israeli Cabinet to expel the President of the Palestinian Authority from Ramallah aggravates the crisis and jeopardizes the prospects for peace that had been opened by the road map. It is a major political error with unpredictable consequences, which cannot be tolerated.

My country, Guinea, concerned about respect for international law, would like to recall that President Yasir Arafat, democratically elected by his people and an historic figure in the struggle for Palestinian liberation, is and remains a key actor in the peace process. Therefore, far from being an obstacle, he is the very symbol of the identity and the march of the Palestinians on the route of self-determination of freedom and progress.

The Israeli decision has no legal justification and is in fact counterproductive. It only strengthens the disappointment of the Palestinians and leads to a programmed death of the Quartet's road map. In our opinion, that is a result of the policy of weakening and destroying Palestinian institutions that the current Israeli Government regrettably persists in carrying out. Such an attitude can never serve the interests of Israel. Rather, it will have the opposite effect.

After a short period of calm during which a ray of hope glimmered on the horizon, the level of violence and political frustration has abruptly risen again, accompanied by misfortune and desperation. Once again, the logic of mutual defiance, marked by the increase in suicide bombings and unjustifiable extra-judicial killings, has taken over.

My delegation regrets that the security and institutional reforms implemented by the Palestinian Authority have not been accompanied by Israeli respect for those commitments. The continuation of the occupation of the Palestinian territories and the extra-judicial killings are reprehensible acts in flagrant violation of international law. They must be banned.

Moreover, the building of the wall of separation, which is the prelude to a veritable bantustan policy, violates the fundamental principles of international law. The wall can in no way meet Israel's security needs. On the contrary, it further fans the flames of the frustrations of the Palestinian population, which finds itself totally isolated and despoiled and which has no choice but to defy this colonialist undertaking.

As well, the suicide attacks that indiscriminately strike Israeli citizens, including women and children, are to be condemned and must not be encouraged.

Those acts, committed by both sides, serve to heighten tensions and to deepen further the chasm separating Palestinians and Israelis, whose futures nevertheless remain inextricably linked. There is no doubt that in such conditions, prospects look bleak and the future of peace in the Middle East is put at risk.

Before this terrible situation, fraught with threats and harmful to peace and security, the Security Council cannot stand by idly or fail to assume its responsibilities. The Council must contribute to the full and complete implementation of the Quartet's road map.

My delegation is convinced that the peace plan, which is full of ambitions and is the fruit of long and courageous negotiations, represents the only real chance for putting an end to a conflict that has been devastating the Middle East region for a long time and which requires action from the international community as a whole.

It is a difficult task for this time and will be achieved through a policy of tolerance and compromise. To achieve that, the two parties involved must employ the same standards, admit their responsibilities and negotiate transparently.

In this critical context, the international community must send a strong signal to both parties, especially to the Israeli authorities to dissuade them from carrying out their decision in principle to expel the President of the Palestinian Authority or to continue to envisage the chaos-creating alternative of physically destroying him. That is why my delegation is in favour of adopting in the near future the resolution presented by the Arab Group during their consultations with the Security Council last Friday.

Guinea reaffirms its conviction that the States of the region, including the State of Israel and a State for Palestine, have the right to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders. That is why my delegation urges the parties to respect the commitments they undertook within the framework of the Quartet's road map and, with the assistance of the international community under the impetus of the United States and the European Union, to ensure the effective and rapid resumption of the peace process in order to reach a definitive peaceful political settlement.

The challenge is immense. But, if we are united and determined to implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, we will be able to reverse the current trend and recover the road to peace.

Mr. Negroponte (United States): I would like to join others in thanking Mr. Roed-Larsen for his very comprehensive briefing.

Over the weekend the Secretary-General and the permanent members of the Security Council reaffirmed their commitment to the Quartet's road map and urged both sides to go forward with its implementation. While all parties have responsibilities in bringing peace to the Middle East, ending terrorism must be the highest priority. Those responsible for targeting civilians and obstructing the Quartet's efforts and Palestinian prospects for an independent State are known groups: Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. The leaders and spokesmen of these groups have openly claimed credit for scores of terrorist bombings, most recently Hamas's bombings in Jerusalem on 19 August and 9 September and in Tel Aviv on 9 September. I think we all recognize the tragic dynamic in play in the Middle East. Each time a glimmer of hope — however dim — appears, a terrorist act seeks to extinguish it.

The Council must take a clear stand against the actions of these terrorist groups and call for decisive action against them. In that regard, we commend the European Union for adopting a clear stance on Hamas earlier this month.

Any Security Council resolution on the Middle East that we would support must contain a robust condemnation of acts of terrorism, an explicit condemnation of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade as organizations responsible for acts of terrorism. Such a resolution must also call for the dismantling of the infrastructure that supports those terror operations, wherever located, consistent with resolution 1373 (2001). We will not support any resolution that evades the explicit threat to the Middle East peace process posed by Hamas and other such terrorist groups.

The next Palestinian Prime Minister must have real political authority to act against terrorist organizations, as well as the tools to do so, including control over all the security organizations within the Palestinian Authority. The new Prime Minister and his Cabinet must demand that all acts of terrorism cease and insist that terrorist organizations and armed groups not under the control of the Palestinian Authority be outlawed and dismantled.

For its part, we believe that Israel must move forward and fulfil its obligations and commitments under the road map. That will provide a supportive environment for the new Palestinian leadership to act decisively against terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which are intent on destroying the road map and the prospects for a two-State solution.

In closing, I would like to underscore that the Government of Israel is already aware of the views of

Council members on the issue of Mr. Arafat. In addition, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated recently that the United States does not support either the elimination of Mr. Arafat or his forced exile. We have conveyed our view to the Government of Israel and have cautioned against this.

Quartet envoys met on 13 September to prepare for a meeting of principals in New York later this month. In order to more quickly realize a two-State solution in the Middle East, we urge members of the Council, Member States and both parties to condemn terrorism as a means of achieving political objectives and to rally to the support of the Quartet road map. That — not another Security Council resolution — would represent the most constructive way forward at this critical juncture.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United Kingdom.

Like others, I should like to thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for his briefing. Before I begin, I should like to underline that the United Kingdom fully associates itself with the statement to be made later by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

The United Kingdom unreservedly condemns the recent escalation of violence and terrorism in Israel and in the occupied territories. We support Israeli actions within international law to act to prevent further terrorist attacks and to protect the lives of its citizens, and we understand the domestic pressure to do so. But the British Foreign Secretary has clearly voiced our fundamental disagreement with the Israeli security cabinet's decision in principle to expel President Arafat from the occupied territories. It would be wrong in principle to force the elected leader of the Palestinians to leave the Palestinian Authority area. But further, the impact of such an action would be overwhelmingly negative for the peace process — radicalizing Palestinian society and leading to an upsurge in tension and violence rather than the diminution that we all desire — and it would leave Israel with no peace process and no partner for peace.

The small minority who are not interested in securing a peaceful settlement for Israelis and Palestinians must not be allowed to dictate and block the political process. That process should not be held hostage to terrorists. Accordingly, the United Kingdom calls on the parties to press forward with the implementation of their commitments under the road map. This is a vital juncture for Israel and for the Palestinian Authority. Both now face a stark choice: to return to the intense suffering of the past three years, or to resume implementation of their obligations under the road map. We strongly urge them not to allow the rejectionists to succeed in destroying the political process.

The Palestinian Authority has an opportunity — and urgently needs — to form an effective and empowered Government under its new Prime Minister. It needs to reorganize its security forces under his control, to take determined and visible action against the terrorist groups and to take further necessary steps to reform its institutions. It is long overdue that responsibility should be exercised. We will continue to offer British support to a Palestinian Government committed to making progress on these issues. For its part, Israel should immediately end targeted killings, freeze all settlement activity and begin withdrawal of the Israeli Defence Forces to the positions held prior to September 2000.

In these difficult times, it is vital that the international community unite in support of the cause of peace. The United Kingdom remains firm in its commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement based on the two-State solution put forward in the Quartet road map. The action of the Quartet to drive this process forward is critical and is now more urgent than ever, so we welcome the decision of the principals to meet in New York later this month. It is up to the Quartet, together, to supervise the implementation of its road map, following closely the actions of the parties and acting when either party falls behind on its commitments. The United Kingdom reaffirms its willingness to contribute to Quartet activities in whatever way we can.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are 26 speakers remaining on my list. I propose that we continue this meeting after a suitable break, if that is acceptable to colleagues. Secondly, the Council has other business before it, including a request for consultations on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. I am grateful to colleagues for the restraint that they showed in the duration of their speeches this morning, but this afternoon we do need to accommodate other business and 26 speakers. So, with the concurrence of members of the Council, I suggest that there be a time limit of three minutes per speaker for this afternoon's session.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

We shall thus continue this afternoon at 3 o'clock, and each speaker will be limited strictly to three minutes. Given that we are now well under way and that this meeting has its own momentum, I suggest that we begin promptly at 3 o'clock.

The meeting was suspended at 1.40 p.m.

United Nations

S/PV.4824 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4824th meeting

Monday, 15 September 2003, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Sir Emyr Jones Parry	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

> **Letter dated 12 September 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/880)**

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-51300 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Nepal and Norway, in which they request to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Sharma (Nepal) and Mr. Løvald (Norway) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to remind speakers of the Council's earlier decision that interventions should, if possible, be confined to just three minutes.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the pleasure, at the outset, of congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I have every confidence that your rich expertise will lead the Council's work to great success, with regard to both this international Organization and the current international challenges. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Syrian presidency of the Council last month. It is also a pleasure for us to address the Council, as we assume the chairmanship of the Arab Group this month.

The Security Council is meeting at a time characterized by the holding of many meetings and the adoption of many resolutions and numerous condemnations of all the negative developments. This activity does not, however, even attempt to mitigate Israel's intransigence and its persistence in expansionist settlement policies — to say nothing of its refusal to abide, as an occupying Power, by United Nations and other Security Council resolutions. That Power has continued to carry out every sort of aggression, persecution and oppression against the Palestinian people and has repeatedly scuttled every effort to reach a political settlement.

It is no surprise to us that the road map has reached a dead end. Since the map was introduced, Israel has intransigently endeavoured to abort it. It has also escalated its military campaign, overrun cities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and continued its policy of siege, closure and liquidation directed against the symbols of Palestinian resistance. In addition, it has continued to build an expansionist separation wall, despite international rejection of such a destructive step. It has dealt a powerful blow to every political effort, including those of the Quartet regarding the road map. We hope that the Council will hold a special meeting to discuss this separation wall.

But Israel has not stopped at that. It has gone so far as to declare, last Thursday, a sudden decision to expel President Yasser Arafat from Palestinian territory. In so doing, it has signalled a move unprecedented in nature that will lead the entire situation to the point of no return. If Israel succeeds, the consequences will be extremely negative. The international community and the United Nations are bound by their commitment to peace and security to go beyond rejecting and condemning such a step. The Security Council, in particular, is confronted with a major and immediate challenge to its ability to uphold its responsibilities in that regard. The Council should compel Israel to reverse its decision that could put a definitive end to peace efforts and could threaten a complete and uncontrollable explosion of the situation in the Middle East.

The peoples of the world, and those of the Arab and Islamic world in particular, expect the Security Council to take a decisive decision to end Israeli intransigence and to put things in proper perspective in that explosive region of the world, so that all the parties concerned can return to the path of peace and fully implement their commitments under the road map. They also expect the Council to compel Israel to reverse its latest decision.

The Council no doubt saw the reaction of the angry Palestinian street, which is still gripped by the extremely tense situation following the announcement of Israel's decision. Suffice it to say that the Israeli decision coincides with the tenth anniversary of the Oslo Accords. Israel is in effect declaring its intention to terminate the existence of the Palestinian Authority and to destroy the entire peace process, in complete disregard of the road map, the efforts of the Quartet and scores of Security Council resolutions. The Council must measure up to its responsibilities as the guardian of international law and maintainer of international peace and security.

I would like to conclude by saying that what we fear most is that, if the Council limits its reaction to condemnation and rejection of Israel's latest decisions, Council resolutions will not be implemented by Israel. That would be tantamount to giving Israel a green light to carry out its decision. We heard the Israeli Cabinet state that President Arafat is an obstacle to peace and that Israel will do its utmost to remove that obstacle. Israel's Vice Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Olmert, then said on Israeli television that killing Arafat is an available option. We must all realize by now that Israel is the country most guilty of violating international law and resolutions. It does not abide by the rules and appears to be determined to realize its declared intentions despite international rejection. It will do just that unless the Security Council shoulders its responsibilities and takes decisive steps to put an end to Israeli intransigence before it is too late.

The President: I thank the representative of Sudan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt, on whom I now call.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Along with the international community and every world capital, Egypt has expressed its rejection, denunciation and condemnation of the Israeli decision that reflects Israel's contravention of every international norm and law and its defiance of the will of the international community. The same goes for its continued policy of provocation and aggression aimed at aborting the serious and sincere efforts made to achieve a settlement that guarantees peace and security for the peoples of Palestine and Israel. Those who have made the decision to expel President Arafat from his homeland, who is the legitimate and democratically elected President, are making a huge mistake vis-à-vis peace and the right of their people to live in their own State alongside the Palestinian State.

Relations between the Israeli and Palestinian parties are at a critical juncture. All interested parties and those who called for the establishment of peace and stability on the basis of justice and legitimacy, foremost among which is Egypt, have all attempted to establish the necessary atmosphere conducive to the faithful and full implementation of the road map so as to bring about the desired settlement. Most regrettably, we have come up against Israel's clear determination to continue its policy of assassinating Palestinian activists. We have also seen a defiance of the will of the international community with the continued construction of the expansionist wall, usurping Palestinian land and preventing Palestinians from living a normal life. That has led to a cycle of violence and counter-violence: the violence of occupation and aggression and the violence of resistance. There is a huge difference between the two, and Egypt has strongly condemned any actions affecting civilians. Unfortunately, there are some people in Israel — even in positions of responsibility — who continue to believe that a settlement can only take place subject to their conditions alone and under their diktat. That cannot be acceptable to the international community.

The Security Council is today called upon to face that new Israeli threat. The Council is also called upon to reiterate its adherence to the road map in order to achieve the objective of two States and two peoples, Palestinian and Israeli, living in peace and good-neighbourliness on the basis of mutual respect, rather than arrogance and attempted humiliation, and of understanding rather than the resort to force.

In conclusion, these are critical moments in the history of this longstanding conflict. Years of experience have shown that it can be settled, first, only through Israel's conviction and recognition of the full right of the Palestinians to establish their independent State on their national soil, occupied since 4 June 1967. We do not believe that Israel acts in the full conviction of that necessity. Secondly, the Palestinians must recognize the right of the Israeli and Palestinian States to live in peace and security within secure and recognized borders. We do not believe that there is any quarrel within Palestinian society on this issue. The international community and the major Powers must today work vigorously and resolutely to establish the atmosphere necessary to a return to negotiations in order to achieve these objectives and to stand up firmly to such behaviour that will have catastrophic consequences for all of us.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council and to thank you for having kindly acceded to the request of the Group of Arab States to convene this debate on an issue of paramount importance.

I should also like to congratulate Ambassador Mekdad of Syria, whose presidency of the Council last month was both effective and eventful.

My delegation is speaking before the Council today to express its deep concern over the grave deterioration of the political, security and humanitarian situation in occupied Palestine, fraught with genuine and serious threats to the existence and physical integrity of the Palestinian people and to peace and stability throughout the region.

Ten years after the signing of the Oslo agreements, the peace process remains deadlocked, despite the somewhat measured hopes raised by the launching of the road map initiative by the Quartet with a view to reinvigorating it. It is against the yardstick of the primary objective of a just, lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict — a key element of our common goal of maintaining international peace and security — that my country intends to measure this latest incredible provocation by the occupying Power in Palestine. This provocation has taken place — by mere coincidence? — 10 years to the day after Oslo and seeks to banish, in complete illegality and with customary arrogance and contempt for law, President Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority, democratically elected by his people with the necessary legitimacy to negotiate on its behalf with the Israeli enemy that is occupying its land and to reach a lasting settlement leading to the implementation of its flouted national rights.

Far more serious, by the admission of the Israeli Vice Prime Minister, killing Yasser Arafat is one of the options now open to the army to remove the President of the Palestinian Authority, who is seen as an obstacle to be done away with at all costs. This decision, if implemented, will only strike the final blow to a peace process that is already foundering and pull Palestine and the entire region into a spiral of violence that nothing and no one will be able to control. It will further weaken an international order that has already been subjected to tension and challenges of all sorts.

It seems clear that, since September 2000 and, even more, since the launching of the road map, the ongoing policy of the occupying Power has no other objective than to thwart the very concept of a Palestinian State and to prevent its establishment. All of the illegal and criminal actions pursued daily by the occupying Power — from its encouragement of illegal settlements and its restriction of the basic freedoms of the Palestinians and their leaders, all the way to targeted assassinations of officials and activists of various Palestinian organizations — are all part of a strategy of creating ongoing tension in exclusive service to the goal of all-out war.

Israel is pursuing the illusions of a peace won by unrestrained warfare that will gain it total victory, without concern for the fallout of this policy for international peace and security. It clearly does not seek a negotiated peace guaranteed by the international community, which would of necessity entail the return of lands conquered by force. Israel thereby intends to benefit from the international situation to modify realities on the Palestinian ground by borrowing from the past a technique that has been conclusively rejected by the international community: the building of physical walls to shore up the wall of hatred and mistrust thrown up by the ongoing wave of violence between Israelis and Palestinians, whom history has condemned to live side by side.

By threatening to expel the Nobel peace laureate, it is peace itself that Israel is seeking to banish and the hope of a negotiated solution to bury. Algeria, for its part, will not fall into the trap set by Israel for the international community of imposing itself on the Palestinian people in substitution for the choice of several generations of leaders who have been equally sincere concerning the aspirations of their people and who would seem most appropriate to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people a just, definitive and lasting settlement leading to the establishment of a viable, democratic national Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and living in peace with all its neighbours.

Algeria has firmly stood by the heroic Palestinian people and its leadership and vigorously condemns Israel's decision concerning President Arafat and welcomes the international community's position, voiced through the appeals of the Security Council on 12 September and the Secretary-General, as well as by other Powers, to Israel not to carry out its threat.

Lastly, Algeria believes that the Security Council must firmly support all such appeals by proceeding to adopt the draft resolution submitted by Angola on behalf of the Group of Non-Aligned States so that legality may prevail.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the United Arab Emirates, I would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, and to wish you success in presiding over the Security Council this month. I should also like to extend my sincere thanks to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Syria, for his wise conduct of the work of the Council last month.

Your prompt response to the request to convene such an important meeting of the Security Council reflects the growing international concern regarding the tragic and serious developments taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories due to the illegal acts and measures taken by the Government of Israel in violation of humanitarian and international law.

Massive efforts have been made by the Quartet and the countries of the region in recent months to contain the violence and to relaunch negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis with a view to implementing the road map. Nevertheless, we have noticed that the Government of Israel has on a daily basis gradually escalated its hostile and systematic campaign against the Palestinian people and their national leadership. This campaign reflects Israel's premeditated intention to jettison the road map, which obligates it legally to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories and to dismantle its illegal settlements therein, in order to allow the Palestinians to establish their independent State with al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. Otherwise, how could the world explain the acts undertaken daily by the Government of Israel, including blockade, deliberate killings, the arbitrary arrest of hundreds of innocent Palestinians and its unjustifiable and irresponsible destruction of Palestinian national institutions and cities, as well as public and private properties?

The Government of Israel has recently taken a decision to deport the elected Palestinian President. The United Arab Emirates condemns all attempts made by Israel to weaken the Palestinian people and sow discord among their factions through the decision to deport their legitimately elected President, Mr. Yasser Arafat, or to kill him, as recently declared by the Deputy Prime Minister of Israel. Israel has already exercised all forms of isolation, blockade and humiliation against him. The United Arab Emirates considers such provocative and criminal actions an escalation of war, state terrorism and a declaration of a new war against Palestinians that will only lead to the destruction of all efforts made to reach peace, end violence, implement the road map and achieve peace and stability in the Middle East.

Therefore, we call upon the Quartet and the Security Council to block this decision and to take the necessary measures to free Israel to reverse it unconditionally. We reiterate our full support for and our solidarity with the Palestinian people and their national leadership in their struggle against the campaign initiated by Israel. We call upon the international community to re-emphasize the following.

First, President Yasser Arafat is the legitimate elected President of the Palestinian people. The Government of Israel, as the occupying Power, must ensure his safety, lift the curfew imposed on him and stop all threats to kill him. The Government of Israel must not make any attempt to deport the Palestinian President or any other Palestinian citizen, and must abide by international and humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

Secondly, the Government of Israel must be ordered to immediately cease extrajudicial executions and all acts of hostility against the Palestinian people or their national leadership. The Israeli Government must also fulfil its obligations under the road map pursuant to the relevant international resolutions, particularly resolutions 181 (1947), 242 (1967), 338 (!973) and 1397 (2002).

Thirdly, and finally, additional political, moral and financial support must be provided to the Palestinian Authority and its new Prime Minister, in order to enable him to form a Palestinian Government capable of reconstructing the national infrastructure and of responding to the growing needs of the Palestinian people, needs resulting from being subjected daily to Israeli occupation, siege and violence.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the Moroccan delegation, to congratulate the presidency of the United Kingdom for its excellent work this month to strengthen international peace and security. I also wish to thank Mr. Roed-Larsen. I listened with interest to his comprehensive and objective briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including Palestine.

This is a critical time. The Council is meeting at a time when we are witnessing an unprecedented aggravation of the situation in Palestine with violence and destruction increasing. The Palestinian population, in addition to its daily insecurity, is enduring all manner of restrictions. In this situation, when the international community is appealing for more channels for the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, the Israeli authorities decided in principle last Thursday that they would deport President Yasser Arafat.

That decision has been taken in flagrant disregard of the most elementary rules of international law. President Arafat is the legitimate leader of the Palestinian Authority and was democratically elected by the Palestinian people. Furthermore, President Yasser Arafat, who enjoys unquestioned historical legitimacy, symbolizes the deep aspirations of the Palestinian people to liberation and a decent future for their children.

The decision to banish President Arafat can only strike the final blow to the peace process, particularly to the efforts deployed by the Quartet to craft the stages and processes for a fair and lasting solution, in keeping with Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1397 (2002), which call for putting an end to the Israeli occupation and creating the conditions for establishing a sovereign Palestinian State that will coexist side by side in peace with Israel.

In the light of this alarming situation, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, President of the al-Quds Committee, immediately appealed to the members of the Quartet to intervene without delay in order to prevent Israel from carrying out its illegal decision. His Majesty also conveyed a message to the Israeli authorities expressing his profound disquiet and grave concern about the serious consequences of expelling President Arafat or of any attack on his person or security.

The Kingdom of Morocco firmly believes that the resolution of this conflict requires a dialogue and the return of the parties to the negotiating table. That should take place as soon as possible, without preconditions or unilateral initiatives that might accelerate an escalation of the spiral of violence and retaliation.

As for us, we have often condemned terrorism, as did the representative of Palestine this morning. We have condemned terrorism, regardless of its origin and motivations. Yet we have always insisted that every effort be made to eliminate the causes of this scourge.

Wisdom, moderation and dialogue remain the best guarantors of a fair and lasting solution to the Middle East crisis. It is in that spirit that the Kingdom of Morocco reiterates its full readiness to multiply efforts and contacts in order to restore the momentum of the road map co-sponsored by the Quartet and supported by the international community as a whole. We keenly hope that, through the Security Council, the international community will send Israel a clear message to reconsider its decision. We appeal for an end to all forms of violence.

We must not allow the circle of violence and reprisals to lead us off the path of peace, security and regional stability. The United Nations, in particular the Security Council, must shoulder its responsibilities with respect to the deteriorating situation in Palestine.

The goal is clear. The creation of a Palestinian State is the only way to ensure security for all the children of the region. It is certainly not by eliminating the legitimate Palestinian interlocutor that the Israeli authorities will make progress towards greater security and tranquillity.

The President: I thank the representative of Morocco for his kind words addressed to me. The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bahrain, on whom I now call.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to express our thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. President, and all the members of the Council for holding, under your wise and capable presidency, this important meeting of the Security Council to discuss the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian territories. We would also like to extend our thanks to your honourable predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who spared no effort to lead the work of the Council to success last month.

This meeting of the Security Council is taking place at a time of grave circumstances in the Middle

East and the seriously deteriorating situation that the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority have witnessed on a daily basis owing to continued Israeli aggression. The Israeli decision in principle to expel President Arafat, who was elected by the Palestinian people, will have serious consequences on the situation in the Palestinian territories. It will gravely impact on all efforts to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region, a peace for which we have called for a very long time. If implemented, the decision to expel President Arafat will seriously affect stability and will be a setback to peace in the Middle East, for which the Arab States have been seriously and sincerely working. Mr. Arafat's expulsion would be a further act of defiance against the international community.

We can only express our grave concern for the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories as a result of the Israeli Government's insistence on its policy of assassination and of aborting all peace efforts by imposing conditions not contained in the peace process known as the road map. Furthermore, Israel continues to construct its security wall of separation on the pretext of ensuring its own security, while the main objective of that wall really is to gain control over more of the Palestinian territories. Continuing to build the separation wall will gravely harm peace efforts and confidence-building measures between the parties as stipulated in the road map and will even further suffocate the Palestinian people.

The ceasefire declared by the Palestinian factions and by Israel represented a positive step towards an atmosphere of peace and stability in the region. However, Israel's persistence in its policy of assassination has gravely harmed that ceasefire. Therefore, we believe that the Israeli Government should put an immediate end to its policies of assassination, violence, assaulting cities and destroying homes, and other measures that can only harm the road map and the peace process as a whole. The international community as represented by the Security Council should demand that the Israeli Government cease its attempts to abort the road map and assume its international obligations for the realization of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

In that context, we believe that the time has come for the Security Council to dispatch an international force to disengage the two sides, as another contribution by the United Nations to the final settlement of the peace process in the region.

In conclusion, we can only hope that our deliberations will lead to tangible efforts that pave the way for comprehensive peace in the region. However, it should once again be reaffirmed that peace and security in the Middle East can be achieved only through the implementation of United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), which call for an end to Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories, for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital and for the return of all refugees and displaced persons to their lands.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list under rule 39 is the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, on whom I now call.

Mr. Mahmassani (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and wish you every success in your endeavour. I would also like to express our thanks to the delegation of Syria for its effective and able presidency of the Council last month. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Fayssal Mekdad on his appointment as Permanent Representative of Syria to the United Nations.

The crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict is Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories and its blocking of all efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Israel continues to pursue that policy despite the calls of the international community, the resolutions of the Security Council and the Arab peace initiative adopted at the 2002 Beirut Summit, which was unanimously welcomed by the Security Council but rejected by Israel.

After 50 years of war and violence, when will the Government of Israel be persuaded that a policy of war, violence and force will not solve the question of the Middle East? When will it be persuaded that peace negotiations and the implementation of the resolutions of international legality are the only way for Israel, the State of Palestine and all other States of the region to live in peace, security and stability? Israel's attempt to recast the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the optic of the war against terrorism is a failed and ridiculous effort deceiving no one. The Palestinian people are the victims of Israel's arbitrary practices. The crux of the conflict is Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Mr. Roed-Larsen has painted a bleak picture of the situation of the Palestinian people as a result of the occupation and the practices of the Israeli forces. He once again portrayed the bleak future of the prospects of peace in the region, owing to Israeli intransigence. Israel has put up all kinds of obstacles to the implementation of the road map. Now it continues to establish settlements and construct an expansionist wall, which will not provide security for the Israelis. Rather, it puts the Palestinian people in an enormous jail.

Ending the Israeli occupation and establishing a just peace is the only way to provide security for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples alike. Israel's violation of international humanitarian law and of the Geneva Conventions has become routine, as if it were of no concern to anyone in the international community. Israel has even gone so far as to adopt an official decision in principle to expel President Arafat, the elected President of the Palestinian people, to threaten his safety and his life. That is an illegal and immoral decision, and any attack on the Palestinian President is an attack on the Palestinian people as a whole. Israel knows that attacking him will not lead to peace or security, but rather will fan the flames of violence and will increase the wrath of the Palestinian people.

How can the Security Council stand idly by, in full view of Israel's flagrant defiance of the international community? We call upon the Council to take a clear stand that will put an end to Israel's flouting of moral values and of international laws and that will compel it to return to the path of peace by implementing the road map and withdrawing from all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and the Sheba'a Farms in Lebanon, according to the Arab peace initiative and in order to achieve a just and lasting solution in the region.

The President: I congratulate the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations on his comparative brevity.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Papa Louis Fall, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fall (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Wehbe, Permanent Representative of Syria, who led the work of the Council last month with exemplary effectiveness.

In addition, I am grateful to you, Mr. President, and to members of the Council for having allowed me to take the floor in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to participate with you in this important debate — initiated by the Arab Group — on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, following the Israeli decision in principle to expel or banish the President of the Palestinian Authority, His Excellency Mr. Arafat.

I have two series of comments to make. The first concerns the explosive situation on the ground following the attacks and incursions by the Israeli army on Palestinian territory, the extrajudicial executions and the spiral of attacks, violence, counter-violence, vengeance, counter-vengeance, which — as has been repeatedly stated here — is rooted in the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. I would add that the situation has worsened extremely seriously, since we have recently witnessed suicide attacks and loss of human life on the part of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Our Committee, as it has always done, most vigorously condemns all forms of violence and all attacks, whatever the motivations, whoever the victims and whatever the justifications, a priori or a posteriori. Because life is sacred, we cannot use children or other innocent people to seek to support any cause of any sort; we are very clear on that.

Israel is continuing to plant settlements in Palestinian territory, in total violation of international law, and I believe that that deserves to be emphasized. The Council truly needs to send a strong signal to the occupying Power to make it understand — in the context of the international community's condemnation — that those actions must cease. There must also be an end to the building of the separation wall, which will only encroach seriously on Palestinian territory and which, if we are not careful, will be a sort of fait accompli that predetermines the future relationship and the drawing of the border.

The second series of observations that I should like to make concerns the threat of banishment or deportation decided in principle by the Israeli Government. Is it a trial balloon, a deliberate intention or a well-considered decision, or is it a kind of diversion — a diversion with incalculable consequences? At a time when all our attention is focused on the need for both parties to implement the road map, is it an attempt to divert attention in order to create a new causus belli — a new situation based on which the community's attention would be focused elsewhere, and we would ask Israel to show its understanding, to do this or that, and everyone would move in Israel's direction, to call upon it to reverse its decision? That would risk shifting attention from the origin of the problem, which is the occupation of Palestinian territory and the continued building of the separation wall.

Having said that, I think that the Council is at a crossroads, because a grave decision has been made and a personality of the Israeli Government, no less, has indicated that Israel has several options, including the elimination of President Arafat. There is only a short distance between that and a killing or an assassination. And if that were to take place, the consequences would be unpredictable, not only for Israel and Palestine, but also for the Middle East and the whole international community, even Africa.

Here, I should like to say that, in certain countries where prayers are said in mosques on Friday — such in as Senegal, where I am from — we are certain that this situation would be used to create chaos and that it could even lead to the breaking of diplomatic relations between some countries or between some countries and Israel, which we do not want to happen. That is why we call upon Israel to be measured, to have a sense of discernment and to be careful, because someone could make an appeal, perhaps out of a burst of anger or to launch a trial balloon, but others — who already have the opportunity to assassinate a Prime Minister, co-laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize — may take that appeal seriously and could go beyond Israel's proclaimed intention. An accident, including unintended friendly fire, can occur anywhere.

So that is why our Committee would like to focus the Council's attention and to raise its awareness of the need for the international community to help the Palestinian people, who live in a most deplorable economic situation. We ask for the assistance of the United Nations family and of donor countries, otherwise the situation will worsen. We ask that the road map be implemented in good faith by all the parties so that that vision — which was initiated by President Bush, adopted by the Arab Summit and the Security Council and endorsed by the African Union in its decision of last July at Maputo — is realized at last, and so that the Cassandras, the extremists on both sides will never again be able to carry out their pernicious designs so harmful to the peace we all seek.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): It would be remiss of me, Mr. President, were I to begin without commending the delegation of the United Kingdom for the remarkable leadership that it has brought to the Council's proceedings during these trying times. Syria is also to be praised for the role that it played during its presidency last month.

My delegation is in accord with the statement to be made later by the Ambassador of Malaysia, which holds the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Bangladesh is deeply concerned about the evolving situation in the Middle East, which, with each passing day, is sharpening the pains of Palestine. The spiralling violence and bloodletting are, to say the least, very disturbing. However, a source of greater dismay is the fact that an end to the impasse is nowhere in sight. The road map to peace appears to lie in tatters.

The thin rays of hope that had appeared on the horizon now seem to have been eclipsed by the looming clouds of despair and destruction. The latest in the series of misjudgements that have exacerbated the deteriorating situation is the decision by Israel to expel President Yasser Arafat.

The Government of Bangladesh issued a statement in Dhaka strongly condemning and denouncing that decision and urging its withdrawal. It also demanded the immediate pullout of Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. That Government statement also observed that the decision will create serious obstacles in implementing the road map, which among other things envisages an independent, sovereign and democratic Palestine by 2005.

The Council needs to act, and needs to act soon, to prevent the escalation of horror and hatred. We need to call a halt to the acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction. The efforts of the Quartet must be relentlessly pursued, and confidence in the efficacy of the road map must be restored. Both sides must be persuaded to return to the negotiating table. The appropriate climate must be created in order for that to happen. No compromise on Palestine can be as painful as the failure to reach one.

We all recognize that these will not be easy tasks for us. For these aims to be realized, the international community must take action swiftly, and justly, so that the sufferings of the people of that region, which have been so great and have gone on for so long, cease.

Inflammatory statements will not — cannot — stem the tide of anger and frustration; instead, they will only fuel negative instincts. Harsh language will not — cannot — enhance understanding; instead, it will act as an impediment. These must be refrained from.

We urge calm and temperance in both words and deeds. It cannot be that — in those holy lands from which the three great faiths of Islam, Judaism and Christianity have emanated, as have, in the past, messages of peace and harmony — restraint and reason today are receding virtues. This trend must be halted. Those values, which are the proud heritage of the Muslim, the Jew and the Christian, must be resurrected. Nothing would give us more satisfaction or greater joy.

Bangladesh will seek to contribute to that end in every possible way, in cooperation with all others within and outside the Council, to ensure the triumph of the spirit of tolerance and the rekindling of the torch of hope.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): I am speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We congratulate the United Kingdom upon its assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month, and we thank Syria for its work last month.

The Non-Aligned Movement had noted some encouraging developments in the peace process, with the beginning of the implementation of the road map. However, we are now deeply concerned by the recent turn of events. In the past month we have seen a sharp increase in violence, with repeated Israeli incursions into Palestinian cities; the wilful killing of Palestinian civilians, including extrajudicial executions; excessive and indiscriminate use of force; and the deadly suicide bombings against Israelis. We are indeed dismayed that both innocent Palestinian and Israeli civilians have been killed. Regrettably, many more will die if the spiral of violence worsens. The Movement condemns such acts of violence and deeply regrets the loss of innocent lives on both sides of the conflict. Peace will recede further towards the horizon if the current cycle of violence is allowed to escalate.

The Non-Aligned Movement is committed to a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Movement firmly supports the two-State solution, based on the 1967 line. We believe that peace in the Middle East can be achieved only through the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and national independence and the exercise of sovereignty in their State, Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We call on Israel to come to its senses and accept the two-State solution, as envisaged by Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) and promoted by the road map. Israel's acceptance of and commitment to the State of Palestine is the only way to ensure Israel's security. Continued Israeli occupation and harsh military action cannot be a viable solution.

In this regard, we continue to call for the revival of the road map and further intensive efforts by the Quartet and the parties concerned. We welcome the meeting of the Quartet scheduled to take place in New York next week.

The recent decision of the Israeli Security Cabinet to expel President Yasser Arafat, a democratically elected leader of Palestine, is yet again a prime example of Israel's wilful attempts to intimidate and dominate the Palestinian people, its disregard for international opinion and its contempt for international law. We are shocked at the extent of Israel's intentions, as clearly reflected by the statement of the Deputy Prime Minister of Israel that killing President Arafat was definitely an option. We wish to remind the Council that such a measure by Israel would be a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. For Israel to even consider such a measure at this critical stage in the peace process is more than irresponsible. This provocative decision will only worsen the situation and spark a greater cycle of violence. It will serve only to undermine any progress in the fragile peace process. The international community and the Security Council must not be paralysed in the face of this Israeli decision. The Council must prevent the execution of the threat against President Arafat and uphold the rule of law.

The problem of Israel's continued settlement policies and its construction of the separation wall in Gaza cannot be ignored either. Israel's settler colonialism activities and having a grave impact on the Palestinian people. They remain a major impediment to progress in the peace process and severely undermine the creation of a viable contiguous Palestinian State. We call on the Security Council to act decisively with a view to the destruction of the wall and to preventing its completion. Israel must be pressured to cease the construction of the wall. As envisaged by the road map, Israel must, indeed, dismantle settlement outposts and freeze all settlement activity.

The humanitarian situation of the Palestinian population living under Israeli occupation is cause for grave concern. The Non-Aligned Movement calls on Israel to cease this humiliation of the Palestinian people. If Israel is serious in wanting a just and lasting solution to the conflict, it must know that the Palestinian people need to see real and tangible benefits in their lives for peace to be achieved. The solution for both sides is to return to the negotiating table, not increasing violence and oppression.

We urge the Security Council to take a clear and definite position today by adopting a resolution, which should send a strong message from the Council against Israel's decision to remove President Arafat.

The President: I was just doing some mental arithmetic. The meeting started close to on time and speakers have been averaging five and a half minutes each. The Council did agree it was going to be three minutes per speaker. May I therefore appeal to speakers to abide by that? I have a gavel and a watch, and I may start to bash the gavel after three and a half minutes. Speakers have been warned. I do want to respect the request that we go into consultations following the meeting.

The next speaker is the representative of India, on whom I now call.

Mr. Nambiar (India): I wish to felicitate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also congratulate Syria for its steering of the Council's work in August.

This open meeting of the Security Council has been convened at relatively short notice to deal with the increasing spiral of violence in the Middle East and the decision of the Israeli authorities to initiate action that could lead to the expulsion of President Arafat.

India has consistently regarded President Arafat as the elected leader of the Palestinian people and as a symbol of their cause. His expulsion and removal from the scene would be indefensible in international law. It would represent an affront to the Palestinian people, as well as to the international community at large, and must attract the severest condemnation worldwide. Apart from serving no constructive purpose, it would negate all efforts towards reconciliation. More important, it is likely to lead to an increased wave of anger and resultant violence in the region. Such a move is bound to exacerbate the situation and could prove politically counterproductive. It would definitely have a negative effect on the Middle East peace process.

Israel remains oblivious of the limitations of its uni-dimensional policy based on a military approach that relies on the might of the Israeli Defence Force, without recourse to a concomitant political approach. Its policy of military blockades, curfews and restrictions perpetuates continued dislocation of normal life, economic deprivation and loss of freedom and further demoralization of the Palestinian people. That has led, inevitably, to continuing acts of violence and retribution against Israeli forces.

India has always maintained that the only answer to the ongoing violence would be for both sides to resolutely move forward on the path of dialogue and reconciliation. There must be no wavering in the face of the gravest provocations posed by extremist elements on both sides, who seem to share a common goal, namely, that of denying peace to their peoples. We urge both sides to refuse to be provoked into responding by abandoning the path to peace.

The few months of relative calm after the launch of the road map put forward by the Quartet offered hope to the peoples of the region and the world over for the prospect of peace. Unfortunately, the brutal reach of terror and retribution has negated each budding move towards peace. Targeted assassinations, acts of unwarranted violence, indiscriminate killings and the cycle of reprisals must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. They cannot contribute to a sense of security for any of the parties.

The occupied territories continue to face the threat of economic collapse and social destitution. For the sake of the people of the region it is critical that the two sides, with the assistance of all other parties concerned, move resolutely forward in their search for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Israel has an obligation to exercise self-restraint and patience. It has resorted increasingly to extreme measures, such as extra-judicial killings and armed incursions in Palestinian areas. We are not unaware of the provocations Israel itself has been subjected to. But its decision to persevere with the construction of a wall that cuts across a wide swath of Palestinian land, annexes agricultural areas, destroys dwellings and separates families is both unjust and illegal. Such actions can only increase the sense of despair and frustration among Palestinians and aggravate a situation already vitiated by the imposition of hardships and the suffering imposed by a regime of blockades and roadblocks.

India has consistently supported the Palestinian cause. Apart from this having roots in our traditional ties with the Arab world, India's commitment to peace and stability in the region is a cardinal element of its foreign policy. As part of a broader traditional engagement with Palestine, thousands of Palestinian students have studied in India. There are extensive people-to-people contacts between us, and we have assisted the Palestinian National Authority in upgrading human resources and its nation-building capacities. That will continue to expand.

We have recently seen the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister's reported statement on the assassination of President Arafat being an option. We note that the reported statement injects greater stridency in Israel's announcements. India joins the international community in urging Israel to exercise restraint in respect of any plan it may have that could adversely affect the safety of life and personal freedom of President Arafat or remove him forcibly from Palestinian territory.

At the same time, India strongly condemns all acts of terrorism and violence, and reiterates its position that there can be no justification whatsoever for attacks against unarmed civilians, women and children. Only a complete cessation of violence can provide the conducive environment for a continuation of dialogue. We reiterate the need for both sides to fulfil their obligations under the Quartet road map, and strongly emphasize that every effort be made to ensure its implementation, so that the vision of two States living side by side within secure and recognized borders can be realised and a just and durable peace is established in the region based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

The President: I said my little piece before lunch — and I said it when I assumed the chair — which was an earnest plea on behalf of the Council — the Council having agreed that speeches would actually be limited to three minutes. I do not think it is necessarily the best of use of time to have texts read out at some length and subsequently to have the same texts circulated. When I said three minutes, I meant three minutes. I am going to ask that from now on speakers who have texts circulate them — that is on the record. But could speakers also please enumerate the key points they wish to make orally, and take three minutes to do so. But, if, subsequent to this intervention by the presidency, we have a prepared speech that goes on for more than three minutes, I will gavel and that will be it, and the text is going to be circulated. I therefore appeal very formally to whoever is speaking, and it will be Jordan next followed by Australia, to understand that that is how I am going to do it, out of respect for the Council and for everyone else; rather than necessarily do it in quite such a formalistic manner. I think that is what the Council expected me to do and that is what I will try to do. With thanks to everyone who has contributed, could we try to do it that way, which will be more interactive as well.

The next speaker is the representative of Jordan, on whom I now call.

Mr. Goussous (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you every success in conducting the Council's business. I also cannot fail to express our gratitude to the brotherly delegation of

Syria for its efforts during its presidency of the Council last month.

In the light of Israel's continued unacceptable policies in the occupied Palestinian territories, its ongoing occupation of Palestinian cities, its violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, its continuance of settlement activities and its construction of a wall of separation around the Palestinian people — which violates the line of 4 June 1967 and imposes a fait accompli on the future of the Palestinian State — and given its continuing threat against the Palestinian leadership, the sharp increase in the suffering of the Palestinian people and Israel's employment of arbitrary security measures, including extra-judicial killings, as well as the continuation of violence and the collapse of the ceasefire declared by Palestinian factions, we find ourselves facing an extremely serious situation that threatens the political and peace process.

In this regard, we condemn the Israeli Government's decision in principle to remove President Yasser Arafat, who was legitimately elected by his people. We call on the Israeli Government to reverse that decision. We stand against all uses or threats of use of force against the Palestinian people or its leadership.

We listened with great interest to Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen and wish to reiterate once again our condemnation of the killing of civilians on both sides. The continuation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories will lead not to peace, but to the further entrenchment of the extremists' positions. Peace in the Middle East will be achieved only through the end of Israel's occupation of the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967; on the basis of land for peace and the resolutions of international legitimacy — resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) — and the Arab peace initiative; and through the commitment of all parties to the road map and the implementation of its provisions in order to achieve the goal of establishing a Palestinian State by the year 2005. Any other option will take much longer and require a far greater mobilization of international support.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Australia.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has taken a savage turn. Let us hope that this upsurge of violence will give everyone pause for thought.

In the two most recent terrible suicide bombings in which innocent lives were lost, there were three Australians among the injured. Let me take this opportunity to convey my deepest condolences to the families of all the innocent victims of this terrible and long drawn-out conflict.

Australia is disheartened that this latest upsurge in violence has come at a time when the Quartet's road map to a peaceful settlement, including a secure Israeli State in coexistence with an independent Palestinian state, was showing some promise. No one expected the way forward to be easy, but there was a growing sense of the need to persevere despite setbacks.

The latest setbacks have been bitter ones. We in Australia experienced last year's terrible Bali bombings and we know how difficult it is to look past such traumatic events to a future in which we work together to ensure they no longer happen. But this is what we must all do.

Australia shares the concern of other countries about the Israeli cabinet's decision in principle to remove Mr. Arafat and the subsequent statement by Mr. Olmert, Israel's Deputy Prime Minister, that expulsion was one option, liquidation another. Let me be clear: Australia supports neither of these options. They will not advance the road map. All parties must cooperate to bring an end to terrorism.

We welcome the support in the Palestinian draft resolution for the road map. We support, too, the call for an end to all violence. Last year, we said we hoped that the road map would be given a chance to work. The road map is the only available internationally endorsed path to a peaceful settlement. It has to be made to work — we must all help to ensure that it does. There is really no rational alternative.

Central to prospects for the road map's success will be credible guarantees for the security of the Israelis. Australia makes no apology for its abiding commitment to Israel's territorial integrity and its right to exist in peace and security. We have also called for a viable and independent Palestinian State and have said that we would be generous in our support for a new Palestinian State.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Italy.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and the acceding and aligned countries.

The European Union presidency and member States express their strong condemnation of the decision in principle by Israel to expel the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority and rally their support for the Security Council call on the Government of Israel, made on 12 September, not to implement it. The European Union has already clearly voiced its opposition to any forceful action against the duly elected President of the Palestinian Authority and has urged the Israeli Authorities to refrain from any such action. The European Union believes that the Israeli decisions is a serious mistake and adds further tension, undermining any negotiated solution of the ongoing conflict.

The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens. Such attacks obstruct the efforts of the international community to restore peace in the region and damage the interests of the Palestinian people. The European Union considers the authors of these acts as enemies of peace. It strongly urges the Palestinian Authority to take all necessary concrete measures against those terrorist organizations that are opposed to any political dialogue and undermine all efforts to restore hope and to bring peace, security and better conditions of life to the region.

It is in this context that the European Union has inserted the political branch of Hamas into the European list of terrorist organizations. The European Union renews the call made by the Thessaloniki European Council upon all Palestinian organizations to declare immediately an unconditional ceasefire. The European Union recalls also that the conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council called on Israel to abstain from any punitive measures, including extrajudicial killings, and to act in accordance with international law.

The European Union reaffirms the strategic importance of the Palestinian Authority as a partner for peace. The European Union has strongly emphasized that the new designated Prime Minister, Ahmed Qurei, must rapidly form a new Palestinian Government that is empowered to act decisively on the priorities of the fight against terrorism, the efforts to relaunch the peace process with Israel in the framework of the Quartet road map, and the continuation of Palestinian Authority political and economic reforms without any further delay.

The European Union strongly believes that, in order to achieve a lasting, just and peaceful settlement of the conflict and a comprehensive peace in the region, including Syria and Lebanon, there is no alternative to the speedy implementation, in good faith by the two sides, of the Quartet road map, which contains clear timelines for the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel together in peace and security, and for the normalization of Arab-Israeli relations.

It is in this regard that the European Union has urged both parties to take the following measures. The Palestinian Authority should form a new Government; reorganize its security forces under the control of the new Prime Minister; re-establish public order and undertake visible efforts to dismantle the terrorist organizations; implement the reforms already started; and organize, in due time, free and transparent elections.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We truly respect the decision of the Security Council to give us this little time to come and speak, but we would like to put to the Council for next time that the issue of the Middle East is extremely important to us and we would really like to have the time one day for our views to be heard.

My statement is being circulated, so I will abide by the three-minute rule and simply say that we are especially concerned about a decision taken by the Israeli cabinet to expel President Arafat, who embodies Palestinian identity and national aspirations. My Government believes that advocating the removal, or even the killing, of the democratically elected President of the people of Palestine is utterly unacceptable and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

The Israelis and Palestinians cannot hope to approach a solution for peace by vowing to kill each other. The South African Government has always stated that violence as a tactic or strategy will never deliver the peace so dearly sought by the people of Palestine and Israel. We therefore join the international community in condemning all acts of terrorism and violence, particularly against Palestinian and Israeli civilians. The international community is heading for a serious crisis unless immediate measures are taken to stabilize this situation.

The Security Council has consistently been unable to enforce its resolutions on the Middle East. As a result, the Council's pronouncements go unheeded and are violated with impunity. This adds to the growing perception that the Council is unwilling to act and that it risks becoming marginalized in dealing with this important issue.

The Security Council should immediately adopt a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter calling for a complete cessation of all acts of violence, terror, provocation, incitement and destruction. Such a Chapter VII resolution should also demand that Israel, as the occupying Power, abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War, as 12 August 1949. In particular, the Council needs to place on record the fact that threats to deport or kill leaders of the Palestinian people are unacceptable and illegal, as is the construction of a separation wall on Palestinian land. The Council should mandate the deployment of an international presence to monitor the implementation of the Chapter VII resolution by both sides.

The South African Government calls on the Israeli Government to act with restraint and expresses the hope that the Israeli Government will reverse its decision to expel President Arafat. At the same time, the South African Government also calls on the Palestinian people not to use violence as a means to acquire peace. We condemn all acts of terrorism and firmly believe that violence as a tactic or strategy can never be a substitute for a negotiated peaceful settlement.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodriguez Parilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since the provocative visit of Sharon to al-Haram al-Sharif in September 2000, almost 3,600 people have died; almost 2,800 of them have been innocent Palestinian civilians. The most massive, flagrant and systematic violation of human rights in the world today has continued. Every time there is a hope for progress towards peace, it is dissipated by deliberate extrajudicial executions. State terrorism and the use of modern and lethal weapons of war against the civilian population continue. A strange wall is being built to create a Palestinian bantustan. There are new Israeli illegal settlements and there is no end to the demolition of Palestinian homes. The suffocation of the Palestinian economy continues. The Palestinian Authority and its legitimate President, Mr. Arafat, continue under political and military siege, and their installations have practically been destroyed.

Without the end to the Israeli occupation, there will be no peace. The Security Council remains handcuffed by the United States veto, which has been used 25 times to stop the implementation of its resolutions. There cannot be a just and lasting peace in the Middle East until the Palestinian people exercise their legitimate right to establish an independent State with its capital in East Jerusalem; until all the occupied Arab territories are returned and Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Syrian Golan to the 4 June 1967 border; until there is an end to Israeli provocations in southern Lebanon, the return of Palestinian refugees is guaranteed and the Israeli settlements are dismantled, in accordance with Security Council resolution 465 (1980).

While it reiterates its condemnation of suicide attacks with bombs against Israeli civilians, who continue to be the innocent victims of the spiral of violence generated by the policies of their Government, Cuba rejects the manipulation of those individual acts to try to justify State terrorism. Cuba demands full respect for the person and dignity of President Yasser Arafat and calls upon the Council to act with energy, and rapidly. The General Assembly will also have to exercise without delay the far-ranging powers entrusted to it by the Charter.

I am sorry that the Security Council does not have the time to hear more than three minutes from Member States.

The President: It is not that we do not have time to hear. It is the fact that on Friday the presidency deliberately proposed that there should be an open debate, and that is what we are trying to provide. But so that the membership can have an opportunity, so that all can reflect those views and so that the Council can then do justice to the proper request for consultations on the subject, it is necessary to impose a guillotine.

I work on the assumption that in two minutes one ought to be able to get across three bull points. So three minutes is a bonus. It is a bit of a challenge. It is not what we are accustomed to, but I defy anybody not to be able to make the main salient points in three minutes. I am trying to do justice to one and all, and without favour, as you see. It was the European Union that was cut off as the first speaker.

The next speaker is the representative of Argentina. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): This open debate provides us an opportunity to express our serious concern at a time when the situation in the Middle East continues to deteriorate and the peace process is experiencing a severe crisis.

We have recently seen that the path to peace has been undermined by terrorist acts — the killing of innocent civilians, the re-occupation of Palestinian territories, settlement activities, humiliating treatment of civilians, the blockade and destruction of economic infrastructure and homes. Continuing along that path can only lead to greater suffering to both peoples.

In August and September, attacks by Palestinian terrorist groups in Israeli territory have continued, causing the death of dozens of innocent civilians. Argentina, which is familiar with terrorism on its own territory, energetically condemns these acts, which are crimes against humanity and cannot be justified in any way.

Israel has to respect the provisions of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention. The deportation of persons, not to mention their physical elimination, is a grave violation of international law. That is why we join those who spoke before us to express concern about the decision in principle of the Israeli Cabinet to "remove" President Arafat. We agree that that could be dangerous and counterproductive and that it would further aggravate the tension already prevailing in the region. That is why we appeal to Israel not to implement the decision, but rather to file it way.

We believe that the path to peace is based on mutual concessions and on compromise. The Quartet drafted the road map on that basis, which is today the only alternative to violence and destruction. On the basis of that document, both Israel and the Palestine Authority must, in our opinion, simultaneously carry out parallel activities in the political, economic, humanitarian and security areas.

First, Israel must put an end to illegal settlements, withdraw from the occupied territories and put an end to any type of activity that erodes confidence between the parties, such as the building of the separation wall on Palestinian land.

For its part, the Palestine Authority must stop and dismantle the terrorist organizations. To that end, as is established by the road map, the Palestinian security forces must be restructured and should focus on achieving that goal. We hope that the next Palestinian Prime Minister will have the required authority to undertake that indispensable task.

The alternatives before the parties are clear. They can continue on the path of confrontation and mutual rejection, avoiding all compromise and pretending erroneously to find a solution through force. This is the path of suffering for both peoples and can only aggravate the violence.

The other option, which we strongly support and encourage the parties to adopt, is to reaffirm the commitments that were undertaken in Oslo, and which became a reality 10 years ago in gardens of the White House, with the return to the path of compromise and mutual concessions, which will reconcile the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians to their real independence and personal dignity with the legitimate aspirations of the Israelis to recognition and security.

Argentina calls on the leaders of both countries to reaffirm their commitment to peace and to work together to make reality the vision of two democratic, sovereign and viable States, Israel and Palestine, living in peace and security in the Middle East.

The President: On the present schedule, could I say to my colleagues around the table that I am working on an assumption that there will be a certain amount of time available and that informal consultations will start at 5.30 p.m. That is my working assumption for the moment.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia, whom I now invite to take a seat at the Council table to make his statement.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): First, allow me to associate my delegation with the statement made earlier by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the past few weeks, the situation in the Middle East has reached alarming dimensions. The future of the road map is very uncertain. In our view, it would be a great tragedy if all the work that has been undertaken by the Council and by the Quartet in this regard were permitted to go to waste.

The desire for peace in the Middle East and in the hearts of the Palestinians and Israelis is, we are convinced, superior to the violence and irrationality that are currently militating against the road map. In the view of my delegation, that desire, and nothing else, is the measuring stick of the strategic importance of the road map, and it is what we should continue to measure progress by. The international community can help move the road map forward by standing above the situation morally, politically and practically, rather than permitting itself to become a part of the crisis.

In our view — and this should be obvious — there is no reason to expect peace or the success of the road map if Israel has no faith in it. In particular, we urge the Government of Prime Minster Ariel Sharon to halt its resettlement policy, the extrajudicial killings, the construction of the separation wall and its aggression towards President Arafat and the Palestinian people. We object very strongly to any attempts by Israel to deport the elected Palestinian leader. Israel must also respect to the fullest extent international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

At a historic moment such as this, my delegation calls on the international community for their complete vigilance and support for international law. The Quartet and the Security Council must ensure that Israel fully pursues the peace process and avoids contradictory and inflammatory statements and policies capable of worsening the situation.

Today, we have reached a critical turn on the road to peace in the Middle East. To the benefit of the Council and the international community, the right turn is obvious: it is the one by which Israel faithfully implements existing resolutions. The Council has no option: it can do no less than to make sure that there is no deviation from this right turn. It is the only road that leads out of conflict and into the future.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan, whom I now invite to take a seat and make his statement.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): I have listened carefully to the briefing by Mr. Roed-Larson and the statements by the members of the Council. As evidenced by the rapid development of events in recent days and clearly demonstrated in the briefing and the statements, the road map is at a critical juncture. Japan is gravely concerned by this situation because peace in the Middle East is key to the peace and stability of the region as a whole, and the road map remains the only viable way to achieve peace. In order to salvage the road map from the current crisis, the ongoing vicious circle of violence and mistrust must be broken without delay. For that purpose, it is a matter of absolute necessity for both the Israeli and the Palestinian sides to restore calm to the situation immediately and to resume their dialogue and cooperation in accordance with the road map and, above all, to exercise the utmost restraint and to exert the maximum effort possible to bring the violence to a halt.

At this point, I would like to say a word with respect to the decision announced by the Israeli Government on 11 September to remove President Arafat. The removal by force of the President, who has been elected by the people, will not contribute to the improvement of the situation but will lead instead to a further worsening of conditions. Japan strongly requests that Israel not go forward with that decision. It is our fervent hope that Israel will fully consider the consequences of its own actions and proceed with prudence and caution.

At the same time, Japan recognizes and understands Israel's concern for the security of its people. The Palestinian Authority must be resolute in the battle to stop the violence being perpetrated by the extremist factions. Japan will continue to urge the Palestinian side to take action against the extremists and to strengthen their security apparatus as quickly as possible. We will continue our efforts to assist them in that area.

Terrorism cannot be justified for any reason. Japan reiterates its condemnation of the brutal terrorist attacks that continue to victimize large numbers of innocent people.

Japan will continue to support to the fullest extent possible the efforts by both parties to achieve peace.

We hope that under the leadership of the new Prime Minister, Mr. Ahmed Qurei, the new cabinet of the Palestinian Authority will be formed swiftly and will bring renewed vigour to the efforts being made towards the successful implementation of the road map. Japan is committed to continuing its active support of such undertakings. The international community needs to assist the new cabinet.

However, let me repeat once again: it is imperative for both parties to end the vicious circle of violence and mistrust immediately. Only then can a true dialogue be initiated, based on mutual trust between the parties.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Saudi Arabia, whom I now invite to take a seat and to make his statement.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): We congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency. We thank your predecessor for his remarkable stewardship of the Council. We also thank you for your response in convening this open meeting of the Security Council to consider the grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territories due to the continued aggression by the Government of Israel, its failure to carry out the commitments it has undertaken and its pursuit of policies inflicting open-ended destruction and forcing large number of Palestinians to leave their homeland because they find themselves living in intolerable conditions in their national territory.

The Palestinian leadership has made every effort to implement the road map. Various Palestinian factions made every effort and complied with a 50-day truce, until the Israeli Government violated that ceasefire by an aggression aimed at dragging the Palestinians into a new series of acts of violence, knowing that such aggression and the actions of the Palestinians would dash all hopes for peace as envisaged by the international community. The whole world condemned the decision of the Israeli Government to remove Yasser Arafat.

The Government of Saudi Arabia has condemned this serious Israeli escalation, which could lead to an explosion of the situation in the region and to the total collapse of the peace process. This decision not only is in breach of international law and Security Council resolutions, but also is a new affront to the peace process and to the Quartet's efforts to implement the road map, and it may be the final nail in the coffin of the peace process.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, while it joins the international community in condemning this decision, calls upon all members of the international community — as represented by the Quartet — to move swiftly and decisively in the face of the Israeli policy aimed at denying the will of the Palestinian people and confiscating their land and legitimate institutions. History will not look kindly on the international community for not attempting to do justice to the Palestinian people, for leaving the solution to Israel's dictates, for being biased towards Israel and for allowing Israel to attempt to make peace according to its own vision and its own interests in defiance of judicial norms and the international community's demands. Israel has been and continues to be the genuine cause of the failure of the peace process.

Bias towards Israel has undermined the peace process in the past and will cause its total collapse in the future if this situation prevails. The influential Powers are not playing the role of honest broker. Conferences and initiatives will lead nowhere if they give the impression that nothing can be done and that the road ahead is clear. The international community in general, and the Quartet in particular, must implement the road map and must confront Israel's efforts to torpedo international peace efforts aimed at bringing about just and comprehensive peace to the region.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): The grim trend of developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in recent weeks makes the convening of this open debate both timely and commendable. The new cycle of violence that is taking place in the region as a result of suicidal attacks and retaliatory military incursions, afflicting the civilian populations on both sides, jeopardizes the prospects for implementation of the road map.

The Brazilian Government noted with deep concern the Israeli security cabinet's recent decision to "remove" the President of the National Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, from the Palestinian territories. We view with even greater alarm explicit statements on the assassination of President Arafat.

Brazil recognizes him as a legitimate authority democratically elected by the Palestinian people. In that connection, the Government of Brazil calls on Israel to renounce the decision adopted by its security cabinet and once more urges the Israelis and the Palestinians to act with the utmost restraint. Their return to the negotiating table is the only path conducive to a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the conflict in the Middle East.

I also take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei. His many diplomatic skills — as reflected in his contribution to the Oslo process — will be important for the resumption of contacts with his Israeli partners in the quest for a new momentum in the peace process.

Finally, Brazil reaffirms its full support for the work of the Quartet and its goal to promote, with the international community's cooperation, an end to terrorism and violence, an end to occupation and a permanent settlement of the conflict based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and other relevant resolutions of the Security Council. We call upon the parties to comply immediately and thoroughly with those resolutions, especially to bring about a meaningful ceasefire and Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah. We reaffirm our willingness to contribute to the implementation of initiatives capable of leading to an improvement of the situation in the region, including by participating in an international mobilization under the aegis of the United Nations.

The President: I am exceedingly grateful to colleagues for the forbearance with which they are dealing with the totalitarian regime in the Chair by respecting the three- minute limit.

In terms of the way ahead, there are now four speakers inscribed on my list. I have asked Mr. Roed-Larsen if he would like to reply and pick up any points in the debate, and he will do that afterwards. Then there will be the traditional right of reply by the two ambassadors who kicked off this debate, and, if they want to take advantage of that, I should like — in fairness, because the arguments have been well put, especially by them — to restrict them also to no more than three minutes in any concluding remarks that they may wish to make. That will permit the Council to respect a timetable of 5.30 for informal consultations to begin.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hachami (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. I should also like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to sisterly Syria for its effective stewardship of the Council last month.

We followed closely the briefing that Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen gave to the Council this morning on the most recent developments in the region, and I should like to take this opportunity to thank him for his efforts.

This meeting is of utmost importance in light of the serious events in the occupied Palestinian territories. The danger is growing daily as a result of the Israeli Government's provocative actions, the most recent of which was the decision in principle to remove President Yasser Arafat from the Palestinian territories. Even more alarming are suggestions by high-ranking officials of the Israeli Government that there might be more serious actions.

In that connection, Tunisia reaffirms before the Security Council the legitimacy of the Palestinian presidency and of the Palestinian National Authority, and believes that any action violating that legitimacy would further complicate the situation in the Middle East and jeopardize the peace process in the whole region. Therefore, Tunisia supports the Arab Group's initiative to request that the Council convene this meeting in order to shoulder its responsibilities in that regard. In addition, Tunisia stresses the need for Israel to comply with its commitments under the peace process and under international law.

While the international community is attempting to bring calm to the region and to salvage the peace process, the Israeli Government persists in its policies of besieging Palestinian cities and towns, demolishing houses and infrastructures, extrajudicial killings, and building the separation wall. In the light of the gravity of the situation and the threat to security and stability that it poses to the entire region, Tunisia reiterates the call made by the President of the Republic of Tunisia, His Excellency Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, at the Arab Summit, held at Cairo in October 2000, to ensure protection for the brotherly Palestinian people through the deployment of international forces to separate the parties and to monitor the ceasefire, a proposal that was supported by many members of the international community.

The President: I commend the representative of Tunisia for speaking within the time limit, for which I am grateful.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): Turkey has aligned itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union. That statement thoroughly expresses our shared concerns about the dangerously deteriorating situation on the ground and calls upon the parties to act in a sensible and responsible manner, hence preserving the hopes of restarting the negotiations on the implementation of the road map. I am taking the floor to briefly emphasize a number of points that, from our perspective, have particular importance.

As we have stressed on numerous occasions, the current critical juncture in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict requires both sides to act, more than ever before, with the utmost restraint. Turkey is gravely concerned about the recent decision in principle by Israel's security cabinet to expel Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian National Authority. The international community and the Secretary-General, by drawing attention to the serious repercussions of such an action, have justifiably called on Israel not to implement this decision. We are concerned that its implementation could trigger developments that might jeopardize the stability of the whole region. Furthermore, we do not believe it serves any purpose in our quest to solve the current stalemate in the Middle East.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is not an issue that can be resolved without the support of the international community. Furthermore, the conflict has aspects pertaining to regional and global security that impose heavy responsibilities, not only on the parties, but also the international community — just like in Iraq, where the Security Council is trying to formulate a suitable framework and appropriate procedures to bring stability to that country.

The terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians have consistently been denounced in the strongest terms by Turkey. The Palestinian Authority has been reminded of its responsibility to take all the necessary measures to halt violence. On the other hand, the methods used by Israel in its fight against terror apparently fuel enmity, and should be discontinued. The main premise of the Quartet road map is to convincingly provide the parties with the objective of two States living side by side with recognized and secure borders.

This objective cannot be achieved unless both sides display a true determination to fulfil their respective responsibilities. Establishing security is, indeed, of paramount importance, but it is not the single most important aspect of this question. In fact, the process of strengthening security cannot be convincingly decoupled from the political process itself. The Palestinian people are struggling for their very existence. Improvements that they could see in their daily lives would positively influence the security situation on the ground.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Norway. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): The tragic events of the past few weeks have unfortunately brought the Middle East peace process to a virtual standstill. We are back to the situation of a cycle of escalating violence. Suicide bombs and targeted killings do not achieve the objectives of ending terrorism and occupation. Norway strongly condemns the use of violence as a means to end the political conflict in the Middle East.

The road map is not dead. It has been endorsed by both Israel and the Palestinians. It has broad international support. We are now at a critical juncture where all parties have to strengthen their efforts to revive the peace process and ensure the implementation of the road map.

The Palestinians must fight terrorism vigorously. Security structures must be strengthened and reformed under a unified line of control. Concrete measures against the terror infrastructure must be taken. The reform process outlined in the road map must proceed, and the road map's focus on the parallel implementation of measures by the two parties must be revived.

Israel must stop the targeted killings, the demolition of houses and the disproportionate use of force. In order for the Palestinian Authority to successfully combat terrorism, Israel must assist in giving the Palestinians hope for a political solution to the conflict. A freeze on settlements, a halt to the construction of the security fence and a resumption of the withdrawal of military forces are central elements of the first phase of the road map.

Norway deplores last week's decision by the Israeli Cabinet with regard to the elected Palestinian President — to remove him in a manner and at a time to be decided. Such a decision can only contribute negatively to the peace process and will make it more difficult for the Palestinian Authority to combat terrorism. The international community, and the Quartet in particular, need to strengthen their efforts in providing a robust monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the road map. The past two months clearly show that without this in place the process will derail and progress will not be made.

Norway will continue to actively support the road map — as Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee group, as a participant in the Task Force on Palestinian Reform, as Co-Chair of the local aid coordination group and as head of the observer mission of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron.

We thank the United Nations for its relentless efforts to ease the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territory through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other agencies, as well as for its important role in local donor coordination. We know that the United Nations will continue this important operational work, while contributing, through the Secretary-General and the United Nations Special Coordinator, to the political efforts of the Quartet. These efforts have Norway's full support.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Nepal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): My delegation views with serious concern the unfolding situation in the Middle East. Once again, the Middle East has descended into a cycle of terrible violence between the Palestinians and Israelis. Innocent civilians are being killed on both sides, and the Israeli Government has reportedly decided to remove Mr. Yasser Arafat, an elected leader of the Palestinian people. Each of these developments pushes a political solution a little further from our grasp. The world community and individual countries have launched a number of initiatives to resolve the longstanding problem in the Middle East. Among those initiatives, the Oslo Accords brought some hope — though it was soon to be dashed in the fire of retaliatory violence. The road map drawn up by the Quartet is also facing a very uncertain future.

The international community must continue its efforts to bring peace and security to the Middle East. However, first and foremost, the Palestinians and Israelis themselves will have to bring their political will to bear to find a durable solution to this tragic problem. History has put the Palestinians and Israelis together in a small piece of real estate in the Middle East which both sides hold holy and dear. No one can wish the other away. Both peoples will therefore have to find a way to live side by side.

The road map, despite its many shortcomings, is the only way forward to help find a political solution to the Middle East problem. Violence must stop, and sincere dialogue must begin for both sides to restore hope in the political process envisaged in the road map. We must not allow a handful of extremists on either side to spoil the peace process. All sides must meet their specific obligations if the process is to move forward. The Palestinian Authority should do everything in its power to control the extremist elements in Palestinian society that are perpetrating attacks against innocent Israeli civilians. It must consolidate the security forces and empower the new Palestinian Prime Minister to engage in serious negotiations with the Israeli Government.

The Israeli Government, on the other hand, must stop using excessive force. It must withdraw from the occupied territories forthwith, cease its extrajudicial killings of Palestinian leaders and stop demolishing civilian buildings and infrastructure. Illegal settlements and walls built in the occupied territories are an obstacle to peace and must be dismantled.

My delegation denounces the decision of the Israeli Government to remove Mr. Yasser Arafat, and urges the Israeli Government to rescind that decision forthwith. The members of the Quartet and the wider global community should bring their influence to bear on both sides so that they exercise the utmost restraint and desist from taking any drastic steps that would only worsen the situation and make peace even more remote. The Security Council should help the Israelis and Palestinians to build bridges for a shared, peaceful and secure future through the effective implementation of the road map.

The President: If I may, I will now turn to Mr. Roed-Larsen. After him, we will hear the Permanent Observer of Palestine and the representative of Israel. The debate will then conclude.

Mr. Roed-Larsen: I have taken note of the fact that many members of the Council share my deep concern and sadness over the new bloodshed and the deepening crisis in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, it has been both heartening and encouraging to hear so many members supporting the efforts of the Quartet, as well as to hear voices agreeing that, in order to restart, we have to speed up the road map process — moving from baby steps, if I may say so, to bigger and bolder steps. I have also taken note of the fact that, despite deep differences, both the Palestinian and the Israeli representative here — although with very different perspectives — still keep the road map as their reference point.

New confidence between the parties has to be shaped through deeds. I would like to emphasize that those have to address the two main concerns, namely, territory and terrorism. At this stage, I believe no Palestinian leader can put an end to all forms of terror without broad popular support for the necessary and painful security measures that have to be taken. However, such popular support can only be mustered through the Palestinian people seeing, in real terms, at least the beginning of the end of the occupation. That means, in operational terms, starting the vacating of settlements and halting work on the wall. On the other hand, no Prime Minister can muster popular support for territorial concessions under waves of terrorist attacks murdering innocent civilians.

As I see it, only simultaneous, reciprocal steps — where one side concedes land and the other stops terror — can bring us back to the path of the road map and lead us rapidly forwards to the defined end-goals of the road map.

The President: I thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for that clarification and, more especially, for all the great work he is doing on behalf of the United Nations.

Ambassador Al-Kidwa has asked to make a further statement. I give him the floor.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (spoke in Arabic): We had hoped that the Security Council would today have been able to listen to an exposition of serious positions from both the Palestinian and Israeli parties. We have tried to do our best and have kept to the agenda. However, Israel's statement has fallen to low levels that are improper for this international forum. Such a statement could nevertheless assist the Council in adopting a more strongly worded resolution. That statement represents a flagrant challenge to the international community and reflects Israel's arrogance of power based on automatic protection of Israel.

The Israeli representative's statement also included racial allusions to the entire Palestinian people. That comes as no surprise, given the mentality of occupation and colonialization. His statement was also replete with falsehoods and misrepresentations of the facts, particularly with regard to President Yasser Arafat. I will not even attempt to answer those points.

However, the representative of Israel speaks on behalf of a Government whose Prime Minister and many of whose members have been accused of war crimes. Prime Minister Sharon, in particular, was responsible for the Sabra, Shatilla, Kibya and Khan Younis massacres. Some of Israel's leaders were responsible for introducing terrorism to the region in the first place. One can ask the United Kingdom, the Power that held the Mandate in Palestine, about that. One could also refer to Count Bernadotte, who was also in Palestine. The list is very long. Many official massacres have been committed, including those at Deir Yassin and Kufr Kassem, among other places. There have also been attacks against airports, like the Beirut airport, the downing of airplanes, including a Libyan airliner; the sinking of the *USS Liberty*; the assassination of many members of the Palestinian cadres; the targeting of Arab civilian targets in the Golan; and the assault on the Bahr Al-Bakar school, among other incidents.

However, the worst war crime in modern history is the transfer of over 400,000 settlers to Palestinian territories in order to colonize them: a colonialist settler movement at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

That is to say nothing of the long list of war crimes that have been committed during the last three years, foremost of which are extra-judicial killings.

At any rate, speaking outside the Chamber between the morning and afternoon sessions of this meeting of the Security Council, the representative of

Israel stated that the Council had been hypocritical. He also decided that the Permanent Observer of Palestine did not represent the Palestinian people. I hope he does not decide at the end of this meeting to withdraw official status from all of us.

The President: I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): I must say that I am very saddened — and I say that even with a tinge of pity — at the pathetic remarks of the Palestinian representative. Unfortunately, I will be unable to meet him at his level, because the descent would be too abrupt. He has proved once again that he represents the dark past of the Palestinians rather than the bright future they truly deserve.

As to the claim that Yasser Arafat is a legitimate leader, let me remind the Council that the Palestinians thought that Saddam Hussain was a legitimate leader, along with many other people whom history has chosen to remove from the stage.

The mere fact that the Palestinian representative has felt the need to refer to very dubious events and inventions that happened 50, 60 or 70 years ago proves the very poor case and the very blatant demagoguery that I prefer not to answer.

The President: I thank all of those who have contributed to a fairly long debate, but I think a good debate. We have managed 47 interventions — which I think is not bad — and we have done so in a way that has preserved a sense of the importance of the subject and that I hope has done justice to what we are trying to do as the Security Council.

The Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. Informal consultations will begin in 10 minutes.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.

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Official communiqué of the 4825th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 15 September 2003, at 4.15 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

> "On 15 September 2003, the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B, held its 4825th meeting in private with the potential troop and civilian police-contributing countries to the proposed United Nations peacekeeping operation in Liberia.
>
> "The Security Council and the potential troop and civilian police-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Jacques Paul Klein, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia.
>
> "The members of the Council had a constructive exchange of views with the potential troop and civilian police-contributing countries."